

Forty Five
S E R M O N S
O N
Several Subjects.

In Three Volumes.

By ANDREW SNAPE, D. D.
late Provost of *King's-College*, in *Cambridge*.

Prepared for the Press by the AUTHOR, and now
first published from his Original Manuscripts,
(except Ten that were printed in his Life-time.)

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JOHN CHAPMAN, D. D. Chaplain to his
Grace the Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*. And,
WILLIAM BERRIMAN, D. D. Fellow of
Eton-College.

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Forty Five

SERMONS

ON

Several Subjects

In Three Volumes

By ALEXANDER HENDERSON, D.D.

First Edition of a New Edition in 1845

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SERM.



S E R M O N I.

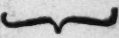
Divine Worship due to the whole
Trinity. Mr. *Hutchin's* Gift
on St. *Mark's* Day at St. *Mary*
le Bow.



MATT. iv. 10.

*Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy
God, and him only shalt thou
serve.*



THE worthy Person deceased, SERM.
who gave Occasion to our as- I.
sembling here on this Day, 
having recommended, as a Subject of
this Anniversary Discourse, the Excellency
and Use of the Liturgy of the Church of
England; I shall endeavour, in my Pro-
VOL. III. B portion,

SERM. portion, to contribute to the End proposed
 I. by him.

THAT there is a God, or Supreme Being, of infinite Power and Perfection, who both originally framed this System of the Universe which we behold, and of which we are a Part, and has continued, ever since its first Formation, to sustain, uphold, and govern it: And that it is the Duty as well as Interest of all the rational Part of the Creation, to worship and pay Homage to that great Author of their Being, is demonstrable from the Light of Nature: The Beauty, Proportion, and Order of the Workmanship may serve to convince us of the one; and a Feeling of our Wants and Imperfections, and a Consciousness of our dependent Condition, of the other.

IT is likewise apparent (as one has lately observ'd) from the universal Harmony of Nature, that all Things both in the Heavens and the Earth are under one Direction, under the uniform Direction of one Supreme Will.

BUT as it was a Point of great Uncertainty before, what Sort of Service would be most

most acceptable to that Sovereign Power, SERM.
the Christian Revelation has clear'd up all I.
such Doubts, and taught us how to serve
him with a well-pleasing and regular De-
votion. We are directed how and for
what to pray to him, with what Frame
and Disposition of Mind we must approach
him, and thro' whose Mediation and In-
tercession we must make our Requests to
him: How to conceive rightly of his Di-
vine Nature and Attributes, to possess our
selves with just Sentiments of him, and
address him in proper Terms: To keep
the happy Mean between superstitious
Horror, and rude Irreverence: How to
behave our selves toward him in the Clo-
set, and how in the publick Congrega-
tion of the Faithful.

PURSUANT to such general Directions,
and conformably to the Scripture Rules,
not only private Christians have put up
their Supplications to him for the Relief
of their respective Wants, but Churches
or Congregations of Christians have join'd
their united Prayers for Blessings of a pub-
lick Nature, and such as related to the
Good of the Community, not forgetting

SERM. to recommend to the Father of Mercy

I. and Fountain of all Goodness, the several Occasions and Necessities of the particular Members that compose the Body.

AND for the performing this Duty with the greater Reverence and Solemnity, stated Forms have been appointed, as by other national Churches, so by the Church of *England* in particular, the Vindication of whose Worship shall be the Business of this Discourse.

BUT as this is a Subject of large Extent, consisting of different Branches, and capable of being handled in various Methods, as our *Common-Prayer* may be consider'd, with regard either to its intrinsic or comparative Excellence, as one's Labour may be usefully imploy'd either in pointing out Beauties, or wiping off Aspersions, as the Judiciousness of its Composition, the Propriety and Unaffectedness of its Stile, the Harmony of its Offices, the Decency of its Ceremonies, its Tendency to promote a Spirit of true Piety and Devotion, and its Conformity to the Rules of Scripture and the Model of ancient Liturgies, would be very proper Topics

picks of Discourse, on such an Occasion, and as there is much to be said in Vindication of Forms of Prayer in general, as well as our own in particular; you will easily conceive that such a Variety of Matter cannot well be comprehended within the Compass of a single Discourse. And I doubt not but those who have gone before, and are to come after me in this Undertaking, have or will fully discuss the before-mention'd and many other Points by me omitted.

SERM.

I.

THAT which I shall have principally in View, and on which I shall lay the main Stress of my Endeavours, will be, to justify our publick Worship, not so much with respect to Circumstantials, as to the true Object of our Worship: The Question now before us will not be, how we pay our Adoration, but to whom we pay it: And I trust it will be prov'd to you, to your entire Satisfaction, that in praying according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, we do not misplace our Devotion, that we equally avoid the dangerous Extremes of Idolatry and Profaneness, that we render Divine Honours

SERM. to whom Divine Honours are due, and

I. to no other, and that, according to the
 Direction in my Text, *we worship the
 Lord our God, and him only do we serve.*

I HAVE the less Inclination at present to enter into any Argument with those who make a Scruple of conforming to our Service, on the Score of some Matters of Ceremony, and under the Pretence of purer Ordinances and better Edification; because I hope and believe that some of their Prejudices are greatly lessen'd, and much of that Stiffness and Rigour abated, with which they formerly inveigh'd against our Communion.

A FARTHER Reason why I forbear entering into that Controversy, is, because we have a more dangerous, and at this Time a more growing Sort of Adversaries to deal with, who are impatient to have our Liturgy new model'd, in compliance with their heretical Notions, with a Pretence indeed of avoiding Matters of doubtful Disputation, but with a manifest View of subverting the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and robbing two of the Divine Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity,
 of

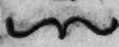
of that Honour and Worship, which is SERM.
unquestionably due to them. I.

THAT in Fact, as our Liturgy now stands, we jointly adore the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and pay an equal Degree of Reverence to all three, as equal in Power, Majesty and Glory, and eternally subsisting in the same undivided Essence, is plain and evident, and there is scarce a single Office in the whole Service-Book, from whence it does not manifestly appear, that we worship and praise, ascribe Honour and Glory to the whole Trinity: The Instances are too numerous to be repeated, too well known to the Frequenters of our Church to need a Repetition, many, tho' not all of them ready collected by an unfriendly Hand, who has mark'd them out as Rocks of Offence, and yet too strong to be eluded: And whatever Artifices have been, or can be used to enervate the Force of them, or to insinuate that such Passages are capable of being understood in any Sense, that falls short of the highest and most consummate Perfection, or be made consistent with any Notion that implies the

SERM. least Abatement or comparative Diminu-

I. tion in any of the Persons of the God-head, save in the Point of Order only, must be fallacious and forc'd, and as great a Violence as can be put upon Words. It highly concerns us then to satisfy our selves, that in worshipping the three Divine Persons, and ascribing to them the same infinite Perfections, we are guilty of no Idolatrous Prostitution of the sole and sovereign Prerogative of God; that we do not provoke his Jealousy by transferring his Glory to them, who by Nature are no Gods; that we adore the Creator and not the Creature, and as I said before, that *we worship the Lord our God, and him only do we serve.*

THE Prohibition of Idolatry is the first and great Command of the Law; and this Quotation of our Saviour, in his Dispute with *Satan*, is a Re-inforcement, under the Gospel, of that and all other Precepts to the same Purpose: And I have made Choice of these Words for the Subject of my Discourse, to vindicate them from Misconstruction, because, however our Adversaries may object that they stare us in the

the Face, and are a Condemnation of our SERM.
 Practice, as if it must necessarily follow that I.
 three co-essential and co-eternal Persons 
 must be understood of as many Gods; yet
 the Charge at last will be found to recoil
 upon themselves, so many of them at least
 as allow any Sort of Worship to be due
 to our blessed Saviour, as the *Socinians*
 and *Arians* do; and those who allow him
 none will fall under the Charge of great
 Impiety and Profaneness.

THE *Socinians* degrade him into a
 meer Man, and will not acknowledge that
 he had any Being, before he was conceived
 in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, and
 yet they not only agree that Worship is
 due to him, but they even contend for it:
 But how can any Acts of Devotion, at-
 tended with such Principles, be excus'd
 from the Imputation of Creature-Worship,
 or how can such Supplicants be said to
 worship the Lord their God, and to serve
 him only?

THE antient *Arians* confess'd our Sa-
 viour's Pre-existence before the Worlds,
 but denied his Co-eternity with the Fa-
 ther, alledging that there was a Time
 when

SERM. when he was not, nor would they except
 I. him from the Number of Creatures, and
 yet they worshiped and invoked him,
 for which they were justly taxed as Idol-
 lators by the Catholick Fathers.

THE modern *Arians* (I was going to
 tell you what they maintain in reference
 to these Matters, but as, in the present
 critical Conjunction, they do not seem dis-
 pos'd to speak out plainly what they allow
 or disallow, but to be waiting for a favour-
 able Opportunity of opening more largely
 their whole Scheme, it would be difficult
 to ascertain what their Tenets are). The
 modern *Arians*, I say, have sometimes
 acknowledg'd, that Christ was not only be-
 fore the Worlds, but that he was the instru-
 mental Cause, under God the Father, of
 making the Worlds, nay, and sometimes
 too, that he is God, or a divine Person, but
 not God coequal with the Father ; that he
 is to be worshiped, but not with absolute,
 supreme Worship. But as it is most cer-
 tain that there can be no Medium between
 the Creator and Creatures, nor any lawful
 Worship but to the Creator, 'tis as cer-
 tain, that if he is the Creator, he is en-
 titled

titled to all Worship, or if a Creature, to none. So that they also are comprehended under the Guilt of Idolatry, as heartily as they would be thought to abhor it : And they seem indeed so sensible of it, that they have cautiously avoided, in their latest Writings, the same Concessions they had made before, of which I shall give you a flagrant Instance, before I finish this Discourse.

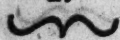
IN the farther Prosecution whereof, I shall aim at these two Ends.

First, To satisfy you, that the Adoration of the blessed Trinity, as that Doctrine is taught in our Articles, and the Practice enjoyn'd in our Liturgy, is our bounden Duty, and agreeable to the Will of God, as revealed in Scripture : And that the confining all our Reverence to the Person of the Father only, in Exclusion of any other Person, is, upon any Principle, impious and profane : I have shewn you already that upon some it is idolatrous.

Secondly,

SERM.

I.



Secondly, To give you a seasonable Caution against being ensnared by some unfair Devices which have lately been contriv'd, in order to beguile unwary People insensibly out of this Faith, and mislead them from the true Worship.

First, I shall endeavour to satisfy you,
&c.

IN the Name of these three Divine Persons, we receive our first Initiation into the Christian Church, according to our blessed Lord's own Command and Institution. *Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, were his own Words to his Disciples, and his final Charge with which he took his Leave of them, when he was just going to ascend to his Father. Can it be imagin'd that he would have put himself and the Holy Spirit so much upon the Level with the Father, as to have join'd their Name with *his*, with that Name for the Sanctification of which he express'd so great Concern, and taught them to petition in their daily Prayer,

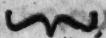
Prayer, that it might be hallow'd, if *they* SERM.
 were not equally entitled to Homage and I.
 Adoration? This will appear more un-
 likely, when we consider what is said just
 before, that when they saw him, they
 worshiped him. If such Worship had been
 faulty, here surely had been a proper Oc-
 casion for him to have check'd their mis-
 guided Zeal, as the Angel did that of St.
John, and to have reprov'd them with a
 — *See ye do it not, for I am your Fellow-*
Servant, and of your Brethren the Prophets,
and of them which keep the Sayings of this
Book : Worship God, Rev. xxii. 9. Or as
 St. *Peter* rebuked *Cornelius*, when he fell
 down at his Feet and worshiped him, —
Stand up, I my self also am a Man, Acts
 x. 25, 26. Or as *Paul* and *Barnabas*
 restrained the Men of *Lystra* from doing
 Sacrifice to them, by saying, *Sirs, Why*
do ye these Things? We also are Men of
like Passions with you, Acts xiv. 15.

THUS did holy Men, thus did a holy
 Angel disclaim and decline, with Abhor-
 rence, the receiving to themselves divine Ho-
 nour; and thus would our blessed Lord have
 done likewise, if he, like them, had been a
 created

SERM. created Being, and were not infinitely superior to Men and Angels. But when instead of any Reproof or Instruction to the contrary, he proceeds rather to magnify than lessen the Veneration they had for him, how certainly may we conclude, that he who would be far from entrencing on his Father's Prerogative, or assuming any more than justly belong'd to him, well knew, and was willing they should understand, that he was a proper Object of their reverential Addresses? so that we have here both an Example of Worship paid to Christ, and a Precept in Confirmation of that Example.

AND perhaps it may be not unworthy our Observation, that the Author of the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, in his Collection of Texts relating to the Worship of the Son, has totally omitted these Words in St. *Matthew*, *When they saw him they worshiped him*, though he cites the parallel Place in St. *Luke*, where they do not happen to be placed in so strong a Light, nor to be follow'd by so remarkable an Allowance and Justification of the Practice.

THERE

THERE is another Passage where the SERM.
Worship of the Son is expresly mentioned, I.
not by Men indeed, but, which, is much 
more, by the Heavenly Host, *Heb. i. 6.*

When he bringeth in the first begotten into the World, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him. If he is the Object of their Reverence, how much more necessarily must he be of ours ! He was their Creator indeed, but us he both created and redeem'd ; for verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Nature of Man, so that he has certainly the highest Right to our Adoration, both as remov'd from him at a more awful Distance, and indebted for the strongest Obligations.

And this Passage, by the Way, will furnish us with a Confutation of one Evasion urged by the *Arian* Writers, who can acquiesce in the Worship paid to Christ, but not as he is God, or as having been with the Father from all Eternity, but in respect to his Redemption of Mankind ; nor will they allow it any higher Date than from the Commencement of his mediatorial

SERM. rial Kingdom, nor other Foundation than

L his acquired Dominion over us?

W

BUT I say, the Place of Scripture now under Consideration, shews his Right to be founded on an antecedent Dominion: For what Claim could he have to the Worship of Angels, whom he did not redeem, if his being the Mediator between God and Man were the only Thing that gives him a Title to Adoration? To which let me add, that it appears from the Place in *St. Matthew* which was just now under Consideration, that the Disciples actually worshipped him, before he acquainted them, that *All Power in Heaven and Earth was given to him*; from whence it may be inferr'd, that their Reverence towards him did not take its Rise from that Principle, but from that Conviction of his divine Power, which made *St. Thomas* cry out, *My Lord, and my God.*

A memorable Confession this! from his just-before unbelieving Disciple; nor can I help observing, that this Instance of Devotion also, by not being condemn'd by our Saviour, stands allow'd: He who thus profess'd his Faith, meets with a gentle Rebuke

Rebuke indeed for not believing sooner SERM.
and on less Evidence, but is not blamed I.
for carrying his Devotion too far, or ad-
dressing him in Terms of too high a Re-
verence.

BUT with a higher Assurance still did
the first Martyr St. *Stephen* pray to our
blessed Lord, and invoke him with his
dying Breath, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive
my Spirit.* And of him it is particularly
to be noted, that he was not only in ge-
neral an inspired Person, and full of the
Holy Ghost, but had the Advantage of an
immediate and personal Revelation: The
Heavens were opened to him, and he had
a Foretaste of the Beatifick Vision, at the
Time when he was uttering those Words:
He beheld the Divine Glory, not as thro'
a Glass darkly, not merely with the Eye
of Faith, but with his natural Eye: Could
such a Person, in such a Situation, be de-
luded or misled? Could he look into Hea-
ven, and not perceive to whom the Ado-
ration of the blessed Inhabitants was di-
rected? How imperfect must our Know-
ledge be, who walk by Faith, if Intuition
its self is no Preservative from Error? On

SERM. this Supposition it would follow, that the

I. Members of the triumphant, as well as militant Church, live in Darkness and Ignorance, and our Hope of seeing God as he is, when once we are exalted to his heavenly Kingdom, would be groundless and imaginary.

THE Case then will stand thus. Either St. *Stephen*, in the midst of so bright a Direction, and glorious Illumination, was mistaken and prayed amiss) which I believe no one will be hardy enough to affirm) or this was no Prayer to Christ, which whoever denies, may as well deny that our Lord's own last Words were a Prayer to his Father: *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*: and, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit*, are Expressions very nearly allied, or if there be any Difference, it is in this, that the Words of the Martyr are in a more direct petitionary Form: Or lastly, if it be allowed, both that St. *Stephen* did pray to Christ, and that he prayed aright; then will it undeniably follow, that Christ is a proper Object of Prayer and Supplication.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, there is a great Number of SERM.
 Texts in the New Testament, wherein it I.
 is not only remotely hinted or implied, 
 but strongly and roundly asserted of Christ,
 that he was the Creator of the Universe.

*In the Beginning was the Word, and the
 Word was with God, and the Word was
 God. The same was in the Beginning with
 God. All things were made by him; and
 without him was not any thing made that
 was made:* Thus we read in the Entrance
 of St. John's Gospel. And again, *Heb. i. 2.*
*speaking of the Son, by whom also he made
 the Worlds, and ver. 10. Thou, Lord, in
 the Beginning hast laid the Foundation of
 the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works
 of thy Hands,* with what follows. I for-
 bear to enumerate any more, or to para-
 phrase on these, the Words are so express,
 and so confessedly ascribe the Work of the
 Creation to our Saviour Christ, that some,
 who are very unfavourable to his real Di-
 vinity, will not dispute, but that he was
 the Accomplisher of that stupendous Ope-
 ration. And one would think it should
 admit of as little Dispute, that he who

SERM. built all Things not only is God, but to
 I. be worshiped as God.



BUT here they come in with a Distinction, and care not to attribute any more to him than a ministerial Creation, and nominal Divinity, and in Consequence of that, an inferior Sort of Worship. *All Things were made*, says one [*δι' αὐτοῦ*] *by him*, as the ministring Cause; that so he [the Evangelist] might refer us to the supreme Power and Efficiency of the Father, as the Maker of all Things.

IT must be allow'd indeed, (and it is so essential a Point, as to be the Foundation of all Religion) that God the Father is the efficient Cause, the Maker and Preserver too of all Creatures that exist, whether visible or invisible, whether in Heaven or Earth, or Air, or Seas, whether animate or inanimate, whether intelligent, or wholly void of Understanding; but this however does not exclude either the Son or Holy Spirit from a joint Concurrence with him in the same Productions. There is but one Will in the eternal Mind, and whatsoever is willed, is the harmonious Consent of the Father, Son and
 Holy

Holy Ghost : I need not add, that what-
soever is effected or brought to pass, (for in
speaking of God, whose Pleasure Nothing
can resist, to will is to effect or bring to
pass) is wrought by the mutual Co-ope-
ration of the Three Persons. And al-
though, in a tactical and oeconomical
View, the Father, as Head and Fountain
of the Godhead, is frequently represented
to us, as contriving ; the Son and Holy
Ghost as executing : Yet there is so close
an Intimacy and Union, such a ready and
willing Communication of Properties be-
tween them ; that every Act performed
by the Divine Power, is wrought by the
combined good Pleasure and joint Opera-
tion of them all.

I and my Father are one, says our Sa-
viour, *John* x. 30. And again, v. 38.
The Father is in me, and I in him. And
c. xv. v. 26. he calls the Holy Ghost *the*
Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth or com-
eth forth from the Father. And *St. Paul*,
1 *Cor.* x. 11. *The Spirit searcheth all*
Things, yea the deep Things of God. For
what Man knoweth the Things of a Man,
save the Spirit of Man which is in him?

SERM. *Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man,
I, but the Spirit of God.*

FROM these Texts compared (and many more might be added) we may be assured, how strict an Union and Identity of Will there is between them, notwithstanding the Difference of their Personality; and how profane and irreverent it must be, to entertain any degrading or derogatory Thoughts, to be more backward in our Acknowledgments, or to yield an inferior and more imperfect Service to one than to the other. Each of them is our Creator, each our Preserver, each of them the Author of all the Blessings we either enjoy or hope for: And though our Saviour made the World in Conformity to his Father's Will, he made it in Conformity to his own Will also, as being the same with the Father's; nor did he act therein ministerially, but authoritatively: He was not barely the Instrument of bringing all Things out of Nothing, but, equally with the Father, the efficient Cause of such Production.

THE Almighty Father, however jealous he is of his Honour, and averse to having it

it imparted to Idols, will never be dis-
 pleased at us, for ascribing that Honour
 and Glory to his only-begotten Son, which
 he had with *him* before the World began,
 or for honouring the Son, according to his
 own Direction, even as we honour the Fa-
 ther. There is, we agree, a Posteriority
 of Order in the Son and Holy Spirit, with
 Reference to their Emanation and Extrac-
 tion ; and so far it will always be our Du-
 ty principally, and in the first Place, to
 make our Supplications, to offer up our
 Praises and Thanksgivings, and to render
 all Honour and Adoration to God the Fa-
 ther, but not in Exclusion of the Son and
 Holy Spirit, who must still be intention-
 ally understood, even where they are not
 verbally recognized : Nor ought such a
 verbal Recognition in Form to be too rare
 and unfrequent, but to recur at proper In-
 tervals, in order to the habituating our
 Minds to sound Principles, and keeping up
 to the true Object of our Worship.

AND such is the Service we perform,
 when we pray according to the Liturgy of
 our Church, where God is acknowledged
 in all his great and glorious Attributes ;

SERMON. where a due Provision is made for obser-

I. ving a proper Subordination; where we frequently implore the Almighty Father, through the Merits and Mediation of his Son, to grant us the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, to strengthen and confirm, to guide and comfort us: But we do not forget that they also are the Objects of our Adoration, that they have a Right to have all divine Perfections ascribed to them, and accordingly, on seasonable Occasions, we supplicate and invoke, we praise and magnify them, we give Thanks and Glory to them in Conjunction with the Father. So worshipped the primitive Saints and Martyrs, so worship the Host of Heaven, such Worship has continued, though not without its Opposers, through all Ages of the Church, and I trust in God, that the Endeavours of the present Impugners of it to extirpate and abolish it, will be as fruitless and unavailing as those of former Times have proved. And in Hopes of contributing, in some Measure, to the rendering them less successful, I shall now proceed, in the

Second Place, To give you a seasonable SERM.

Caution against being ensnared by I. 1.
some unfair Devices, which have
lately been contrived, in order to be-
guile unwary People insensibly out of
this Faith, and mislead them from
the true Worship.

THERE has lately appeared a posthumous
Book, in the Name of an Author, who
was highly and justly esteemed in respect
to his great Abilities, which will of Course
fall into many Hands, and of some who
may not be able to discern the Drift with
which some Passages of it were wrote,
though the Main of it is useful and in-
structive. It bears the Title of *An Expo-
sition on the Catechism*, some Remarks on
which have been lately published by a
learned Writer, who charges the Expo-
sitor with dropping the Worship of two of
the Divine Persons, as in other Instances, so
particularly, in omitting to give any Expi-
cation of the Answer to that Question af-
ter the Creed; *What dost thou chiefly learn
in these Articles of thy Belief?* Answ. *First
I learn to believe in God the Father, who
hath made me and all the World. Secondly,*
in

SERM. in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and

I. all Mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the Elect People of God. To this it is replied, by

one who has answered the Remarks, That what is thought neglected is fully explained in the Exposition upon the Articles of the Creed, and that it would have been impertinent Repetition to have expounded those Things, when he had expounded the Foundations of them already.

I BELIEVE it will easily be admitted, that if this were a true Representation of the Case, there would be nothing blameable in such an Omission ; If the Thing had been done before, there would have been no Occasion *actum agere* : And it is usual with other Expounders of the Catechism, barely to recite, without farther Explanation, the same Question and Answer, as also those which follow the Commandments and the Lord's Supper : And that for the Reason intimated by him, because it would be needless to make a fresh Comment on any Abstract, when the Body of the Work from which it is abstracted,

ed, hath been fairly and fully commented SERM.
on before. I.

THE Reason, I say, is a good one, if it were a true one. But in what Article of the Creed had it been fully explained? He is so cautious as not to refer us to any Place, and was conscious he could not refer to any: Though I think I can point out a Place, which he would have us take for such an Explanation. It is where the Expositor enters on the Eighth Article, *viz. I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

THE Creed, says he, being a Paraphrase on the Form of Baptism, is distinguished under three principal Heads, Our Belief in God the Father and Maker of all. Our Belief in the Son of God Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Judge of Mankind. And our Belief in the Holy Spirit of God, the Inspirer of the Prophets and Apostles, and the Sanctifier of the Hearts of all good Men.

I CANNOT but think it will be the concurrent Judgment of all, who will compare this Paragraph with the before-cited Answer in the Catechism, that this Place was intended by the Expositor to serve

SERM. serve for an Interpretation of that Answer

I. of the Catechumen ; that he had that Answer in View, when he wrote it, and his Vindicator also in his, when he vouched for him, that he had done what was complained of as neglected. Sure I am, that there is no other Passage in his whole Performance, that comes so near, or looks so like an Offer towards a Commentary on those Words.

THE Catechumen says, *I learn three Things*, reducing the twelve Articles of the Creed to three principal Heads ; so does the Expofitor too. Both the one and the other profess to believe in the Father as Maker, the Son as Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost as Sanctifier. And so far it is all well.

BUT here lies the Difference, (and a very material, a very weighty Difference it is) between the Compilers of the Catechism, and the Expounder of their Doctrine, in that the catechetical Profession, short as it is, has recognized the Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father : *First I learn to believe in God the Father who made me. Secondly in God*
the

the Son who hath redeemed me. Thirdly in SERM.
God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me. I

BUT does the Expositor do the same? No. He shifts off the Acknowledgment, by changing the Expression of *God the Son*, into *the Son of God*, and of *God the Holy Ghost*, into *the Holy Spirit of God*. But are these tantamount Expressions? Or can this be called Expounding, when instead of dilucidating and clearing up the Meaning of difficult Words, an ambiguous Phrase is substituted in the Room of a plain and clear one; and the Reader, instead of being enlightened and instructed, is led into Darkness and Confusion.

If the Expression, *God the Son*, appeared too high to him, he might have declared his own Opinion, provided he had declared it as his own: But as the Title of his Book is, *An Exposition of the Church Catechism*, he was in Honour and Conscience obliged to expound it in the Church's Sense.

To conclude this Argument. If the Words I have cited from the Exposition of the Eighth Article, were not intended as an Explication of the catechetical Answer, the Remarker did him no Wrong
 in

SERM. in charging it as a faulty Omission ; for I

I. will venture to affirm, that the whole Substance of that Answer is no where else expounded in the Book. Or if the former *were* introduced as a Recapitulation of, and explanatory of the latter ; I cannot help declaring, that that remarkable Profession of our Faith seems to me to have been repeated, only to be mis-repeated, and to have been explained, only to be explained away.

I SHALL add but one Observation more on what has been already controverted since the Publication of that Book. It has been urged in Excuse for what had been called Dropping the Worship of the Son and Holy Ghost, That the Catechismi has said Nothing about such Worship ; and therefore there was no proper Occasion for the Expofitor to mention it : We are referred to former Writings of the same Author, in which he is said, expressly to contend for the Worship of Christ. But in Reply to this, (not to enter into the Question, what Sort of Worship, and how limited, he formerly allowed to Christ) Will this Advocate for him maintain, that his

his Opinions have been uniform and un-
variable? If not, how can it be inferred
from what he taught many Years ago,
that his later Sentiments were the same,
when we see him so particularly scrupu-
lous, and affectedly cautious not to re-
assert the same Doctrine: And that too,
where it would have been so far from go-
ing out of his Way to do it, that the Oc-
casion required, and the Subject Matter
before him loudly called for it.

WAS he not almost unavoidably led to
it, *Page 11.* of his Book, where he
is enumerating the Duties of a Mem-
ber of Christ, and particularly speci-
fies these; to honour him, to depend up-
on him, to imitate him, to obey him, to
follow him, to be subject to him, but
not a Word of Worship?

WAS it altogether foreign to his Pur-
pose, when he had so well and so justly
established the Doctrine of the Unity of
God, to have added a few Lines, for the
Satisfaction of a Learner, how the Son
then could be called God, and the Holy
Ghost God, as they expressly are in the
Form he was expounding, so as to be
con-

SERM.
I.
~

SERM. consistent with that Unity? And was not

I. here also not only a fair Occasion given, but even a necessary Call and Demand upon him, to acknowledge the Divinity of Christ, and consequently his Right to be worshipped?

I MUST own, that as often as I peruse this Book, I do it with a still more melancholy View, when I consider for whose Use it was principally designed, namely, for theirs, who are to be instructed in the first Rudiments of Christianity; and that possibly some even of the Charity-Schools may soon have this Form of Instruction either openly introduced, or clandestinely insinuated, which I hope the worthy Trustees, who have taken such laudable Pains in promoting that good Design, will be watchful to prevent.

THERE are many good Expositions of the Catechism already in Use, plain and practical, and agreeable to sound Doctrine, where every thing necessary to be believed or performed by a Member of Christ's Body, is directly and perspicuously taught, without any subtle Evasions, or latent Reserves, where the Expofitor is neither
afraid

afraid nor ashamed to tell you the Truth, SERM.
I.
and the whole Truth; where he fairly expounds in that Sense, in which the Words were intended to be understood, and does not interpret them in such a Manner as to common Understandings may appear sound and orthodox, and to give no Offence, but by the Help of a dark metaphysical Term, thrown in here and there, intelligible to few, but those who are initiated and let into the mystical and esoterick Meaning of the Author; capable of being applied, as Times shall favour, and Opportunity serve, to very different Purposes, from what they may seem directed to, at first Sight, and be found to be a Denial of those very Points, as to which you would imagine there was a Concession and Acquiescence.

MANY such Passages there are in the before-mentioned Book, where it is scarce possible even for the Teachers of the poor Children to discover the whole Fallacy, and consequently the Use of it must be very unsafe; even in the most useful and instructive Parts of it, there is a Tincture and Leaven of this Sort, which makes me

SERM. earnestly recommend it to you, that the

I. young Persons, who by the charitable Assistance of good Christians, are trained up in the Ways of Godliness, and the Knowledge of the Christian Faith, may learn the Meaning of the Catechism from the old Expositions, unless any new one should be published by more unsuspected Hands, and with more of Openness and Sincerity, and less of Artifice.

SUCH palpable Collusion is certainly a sufficient Reason for being on your Guard, and not to pay an implicate Deference, in Matters of Faith, to any one, of how great Name and Character soever. Certainly such a Director as will not tell you plainly what he believes himself, or would have you believe, on so important a Head as the Object of Worship, who leaves you to conjecture which Way he is inclined, and is desirous to determine you, from artful Pretermiſſions, and what he has forborn to say, rather than speak outright, can be no safe Guide to follow: And the true Catholick Faith, into which you have been baptized, is of too dear a Concern, to be given up in Compliment to the supposed,
or

or even declared Opinion of the greatest SERM.
Master of Reason and Learning: I.

THIS naturally brings back to one's Remembrance a former Instance of no very sincere Dealing in the same Author, in a metrical Translation of the *Doxology* and *Te Deum*, substituted in the Room of a former Version provided by our present Metropolitan for the Use of the same Parish. In which new one, the *Doxology* in some Places is changed, and instead of giving Glory (as was done before) to the three Persons in the Godhead, the Father alone is glorified through the Son, without any Mention of the Holy Ghost.

AND of this Alteration not the least Notice was given in the Title of the reprinted Book, nor the remotest Hint, from whence one could suspect that it was not literally the same with what was already in the Hands of the Parishioners. Thus were unwary People to be cheated out of their Faith insensibly, and to be led into a destructive Snare, without any Suspicion whither they were going. Had the Alteration been ever so innocent in its self, yet surely it was a Piece of Justice due

SER M. both to the Reader, and the original Collector, fairly to have confessed in the Front of the Book, the Liberty that had been taken : Much more when there had been a Variation made in a Point of so great Concernment. The *Doxology* thus modelled, was frequently sung by the Inhabitants of that unhappy Parish, the Charity Children were taught it, and several Hundreds of Copies were sent abroad to the *Plantations*.

WHAT farther Innovations, in the same clandestine Manner, another Edition might have produced, if this had passed uncensured, is best known to the Searcher of Hearts ; and what may yet follow, in Defiance of all Censure, must be left to the Discovery of Time. It is too plain at least from many correspondent Circumstances, that the Change already made, was not without Design of lessening Peoples Reverence for the second and third Persons in the blessed Trinity. And what gives just Cause for Suspicion, that a farther Progress was intended in such an unjustifiable Liberty, is this Consideration, that without a farther Progress, the Steps already taken,

taken, must be very insignificant to those SERM.
for whose Use they seem to have been cal- I.
culated. }

THE Omission, I say, of the Son and Holy Ghost in two or three Places, where they had usually been mentioned in Terms of Adoration will afford but small Relief to the Opposers of the sacred Mysteries, so long as the whole publick Service does every where abound with Acknowledgments of their Divinity. And that Man's Conscience must be of a very peculiar Cast, who can comfort himself with the Thoughts that he has once avoided that very *Doxology* in Verse, which he had repeated in Prose, it may be ten Times in the same Day. Can you conceive any thing more capricious, than that a Man, who, at the End of every Psalm, can contentedly say, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost*, should yet make a Scruple of the same Form of Adoration, when only turned into Metre?

AND the like Observation may be made on a very surprizing Change in the metrical Translation of the Beginning of *Te Deum*, according to this new Reformation.

SERM. That noble and lofty Song is daily repeated in our Morning Service, wherein the Praises of the whole Trinity are celebrated in the most strong and expressive Terms. How poor and unworthy an Attempt was it then, to pervert the Sense, and extinguish the Spirit of that exalted Composition by a studied Mis-translation, and to make it speak Nonsense, that it might not speak Orthodoxy?

To convince you that I do no Wrong to the new Translator, I will give you the Words as they stand both in the Old and New Version : But first let me recite the Passage as we find it in our *Common-Prayer Book*. *The Holy Church throughout all the World doth acknowledge Thee the Father of an infinite Majesty : Thine Honourable, True, and Only Son : Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter*. What Person of common Understanding does not see, that all the three Persons are here represented as intitled to an equal Degree of Acknowledgment, which both Translators render by Adoration, and that they are all to be referred in common to the Verb *acknowledge* ? Of this the former Translator was duly sensible,

fible, who accordingly has given us this SERM.
 fair and honest Version of that Part which I.
 belongs to the Son and Holy Ghost. ~

Giving due Adoration

Unto thy true and only Son,

And to the Holy Ghost, from whom

As the sole Spring our Comforts come.

But the new one could not, or would not see the obvious Meaning of Words, as plain as ever were expressed in any Language, but has given his own Turn to them, and presented the Reader not with what is in the Original, but with what he has a Mind should be there. It is as follows:

Paying all Adoration

(He does not say to whom, which leaves the Sentence imperfect.)

Through thy below'd and only Son,

And thy most Holy Spirit, &c.

BUT is there such a Word as *through*, or any Thing of equal Importance with it, in the Passage he pretends to render? Is it fair Dealing to thrust in a Word, on which

SERM. the Hinge of a Controversy turns, and to
 I. father it on another Person, whose declar'd Opinion is on the other Side, and so declared in that very Place? To call it *Te Deum* at the Top of the Page, and induce People to believe that they are singing, as they were used to do, that excellent Hymn turned into Metre, when they are singing what tends to enervate the Force of it, and to elude the Doctrine therein professed?

By the Help of such a Latitude in the Version, it is easy to represent any ancient Writer as a Favourer of whatever Opinions the Translator thinks fit: And after such an Instance as is now before us, I should not be at all surprized, if in a future Edition of this Book, the *Creed* should be dealt with in the same Manner, that the *Te Deum* has been in this, and *Athanasius* himself be taught to speak *Arianism*.

AND now, if any one should ask me, whether there is any Thing criminal or unsound in the Expression of adoring or glorifying God through Christ; I very freely answer, No, I confess it to be the Language of Scripture it self, and that St. *Paul* concludes his Epistle to the *Romans* with

with this *Doxology*, *To God only wise, be SERM.*
Glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. I.

WHERE then, it will be urged, lies the Harm, in speaking as an inspired Apostle had spoke before? To this I reply, That when that inspired Apostle wrote, there were no Disputes started about the Trinity: Our Saviour was but newly risen, and the Holy Ghost but newly given, That divine Act of Christ's raising himself from the Dead, was so fresh in their Remembrance, and the Holy Ghost wrought so powerfully and so wonderfully in and by the Apostles, that neither they nor their Followers had any Doubt about the Divinity of either. It was so much taken for granted, that whatever Glory was ascribed to one Person of the Godhead, was common to the three, that there was less Need of a more explicate Confession; and St. Paul, in the several Forms of Salutation, Blessing and Doxology, with which he begins and ends his Epistles, seems almost indifferent which of them he mentions, whether this or that, or all three, as sensible that which soever of them was specified, the others would be understood

SERM. stood to be virtually included : And we

I. are sure from his frequent Acknowledgment of the Divinity of them all, that when he stiles the Father *God only wise*, he no more intended to exclude the Son, than St. *Jude* meant to exclude the Father, when he said,— *To the only wise God our Saviour.*— And that although St. *Paul* gives Glory to God through Christ, (as all that we offer to God, or expect from him, must be conveyed through his Mediation) yet he glorified Christ also as God, and paid all divine Adoration to him.

BUT in process of Time, there arose Enemies to this Doctrine, and then those Hereticks made it a Mark of Distinction to adhere to the most concise and compendious Forms they could meet with in Scripture, overlooking such others as were more full and explicite, without considering that the Substance of such full Confessions, was in Effect comprehended in those short ones to which they did adhere.

ALTHO' therefore we both may and ought to glorify God through Christ, yet if we mean thereby to exclude Christ himself from the Glory which he had with the

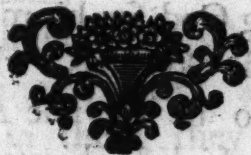
the Father before the World began, our SERM.
Faith is unsound, and our Notions repug- I.
nant to what is expressly revealed in Scrip-
ture.

BUT that such an Exclusion was intended by the newly introduced *Doxology*, may be too evidently discerned.

I CONCLUDE with the Collect for the Day.

O Almighty God, who hast instructed thy holy Church with the Heavenly Doctrine of thy Evangelist St. Mark [and the other Evangelists] give us Grace, that being not like Children carried away with every Blast of vain Doctrine, we may be established in the Truth of thy Holy Gospel, through Jesus Christ our Lord;

TO whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, &c.





S E R M O N II.

*The Character of hearing Prayer
a proper Ground for coming to
God.*



PSAL. lxxv. 2.

*O thou that hearest Prayer, unto
thee shall all Flesh come.*

SERM.
II.



HE Holy Psalmist is here prai-
sing God for his manifold Grace
and Goodness, whom he ac-
knowledges to be the sole Author of all
the Blessings which he himself or the rest
of Mankind had already received, or had
Encourage-

a proper Ground for coming to God. 45

Encouragement to expect, whether they SERM.
related to their Souls or Bodies ; that to II.
Him alone was to be ascribed Redemption
from Sin, Election to Favour, Admission
to his Holy Sanctuary, Deliverance from
Enemies, Protection from Dangers, and a
plentiful Supply of all Things necessary
for the Ease or Convenience of Life.

AND as he is most copious, and enlarges very amply and rhetorically on this last Particular, *viz.* his visiting the Earth and watering it, making it fruitful and blessing it with Increase ; the Psalm is with good Reason supposed to have been occasioned by a seasonable and gracious Relief, obtained by the earnest Supplication of his People, after a long-continued Drought and Scarcity, when both they themselves and the Earth, by whose Fruits they were to be sustained, were almost scorched up for lack of Moisture, whilst the refreshing Dew of Heaven was withheld from them.

BUT forasmuch as, while they were thus hungry and thirsty, and while their Soul fainted in them, they cried unto the Lord in their Trouble, and were accordingly

46 *The Character of hearing Prayer;*

SERM. ingly delivered from their Distress; the

II.  holy Psalmist very justly takes occasion from thence, to magnify God for the Greatness of the Deliverance: And he very fitly introduces the other great Things he was going to ascribe to him, with a Confession of his Readiness to hear and succour those that call upon him, and of the Obligation as well as Encouragement that arises from this his Willingness to hear and grant, to make our most humble Addresses to him, for whatever good Thing we stand in need of, and to him likewise to make our most grateful Returns of Praise and Thanks for such Requests as have been already answered. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion, and unto thee shall the Vow be performed. O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all Flesh come.* In which Words we may observe these four Things.

First, The Truth of the Assertion.

God is indeed, what the Psalmist affirms of him, *a God that heareth Prayer.*

Secondly,

a proper Ground for coming to God. 47

SERM.

II.

Secondly, That it is a Property belonging to God alone. Thou emphatically, and no other, art a God that hearest Prayer.

Thirdly, The Reasonableness and Force of the Inference drawn from that Assertion, because he beareth Prayer, therefore shall all Flesh come to him.

Fourthly, It will be proper to consider this Argument by way of Reverse, and to note, how unreasonable and vain a Thing it is, to come unto any Being, that is, to call upon any Being for Succour, that cannot hear our Prayer.

I. Let us consider the Truth of the Assertion, how God is indeed, what the Psalmist affirms of him, *a God that beareth Prayer. Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World, Acts xv. 18. He is not far from every one of us, forasmuch as in him we live and move, and have our Being, Acts xvii. 27,*
28.

48 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. 28. There is no Action we undertake, no

II. Word we utter, no Thought we conceive, but he is privy to it, nay, he knew and understood it long before either that, or we ourselves were conceived. He is continually about our Path, and about our Bed, and spies out all our Ways; he discerns every Motion and Tendency of our Heart, and is a Witness as well as Judge of every Inclination. He knows the Sincerity or Deceitfulness of our Purposes, whether or no, or how far our outward Professions correspond with our secret Intentions, from what latent Springs our Actions proceed, what private Aims, what remote and consequential Advantages we have in View, whilst to our Fellow-Creatures we appear to be free from all Bias or Design, but that of doing Good and being serviceable in our Generation.

AND as we are thus assured in Scripture of the Perfection of His Knowledge in general, so particularly with Regard to Prayer, we have many repeated Assurances both in the Old and New Testament, that when we call upon him, He will hear us. *When I cry unto God, says the Psalmist,*
be

a proper Ground for coming to God. 49

he will hear me. In the Evening and in the Morning and at Noon Day will I call, and that instantly, and he shall hear my Voice. SERM. II.

WE are told that the Lord hearkneth and heareth, and a Book of Remembrance is written before him; that there is not a Word in our Tongues, but he knoweth it altogether, nor a Thought in our Hearts, that can be with-holden from him.

WE are exhorted to enter into our Closet, and shut the Door, and to pray unto our Father that seeth in Secret; and we read of holy and devout Persons, whose Supplications, tho' offered up in the most private Manner, have not only ascended for a Memorial before God, but have actually procured for them an immediate Supply of the Blessings they implored.

THUS it was in the Case of *Hannah*, who prayed to the Lord in the Bitterness of her Soul, and wept sore: And tho' old *Eli*, who observing the Motion of her Lips, but hearing no articulate Sound, had put a very hard Construction on her Proceeding, and judged her to be heated

50 *The Character of bearing Prayer,*

SERM. with something else than the real Fervour
 II. of Devotion; yet God who seeth not as
 Man seeth, and knew the Sincerity of her
 Heart, accepted her Supplication, and
 granted her the Thing she prayed for.

THUS was *Solomon* heard, when he
 asked for a wise and understanding Heart,
 and Ability to judge so great a People, in
 Preference to Riches and Honour, and
 other worldly Advantages, which are made
 the usual Subjects of most Men's Wishes,
 and such as their Hearts are most intent-
 ly set upon. For we read, that as the
 Reward of his pious and prudent Choice,
 God was pleased not only to grant that
 which was the direct Matter of his Prayer,
 but even those inferior and subordinate
 Blessings too, which, in Consideration of
 Wisdom he had postponed, were added
 to his Portion.

IN like Manner when good *Hezekiah*
 had received a Summons by the Prophet
 to prepare for immediate Death, he turn-
 ed his Face to the Wall from those that
 were about him, and prayed earnestly to
 God; who knowing the Sincerity of his
 Soul, and the Truth of what he alledged,
 that

a proper Ground for coming to God. 51

that he had indeed walked before him SERM.
with a perfect Heart, and had done that II.

which was good in his Sight, sent back
the Prophet again with this gracious Mes-
sage: *I have heard thy Prayer, I have
seen thy Tears: Behold I will heal thee:
On the third Day thou shalt go up unto
the House of the Lord. And I will add
unto thy Days fifteen Years, and I will deli-
ver thee and this City out of the Hand of the
King of Assyria; and I will defend this City
for mine own Sake, and for my Servant
David's Sake.*

THE Truth of this Assertion might
farther be evinced from the Instances of
Cornelius, and other good Men under the
New Testament, whose devout and earn-
est Petitions have been heard and answer-
ed by that God, whose Ears are always
as open to the Prayers of his Servants, as
their most secret Actions are to his All-
seeing Eye. There is not the softest Mur-
mur, or most gentle Whisper of their
Souls that can escape his Observation. His
Holy Spirit first leads and directs them
in those pious and ardent Breathings, and
then conveys them to the Throne of

52 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. Grace, and joyns his powerful Intercession

II. that they may not ascend in vain, but obtain the requested Favour. Let the Petitions be never so numerous, offered up from the Closet Retirement, and from never so distant Parts at one and the same Instant, he is still at Leisure to attend to the very minutest of them, and both able and willing to grant them to the utmost. He hears the Supplications of the godly, and he hears the bitter Curses and Imprecations of the wicked, and will answer them both in the Manner that best befits them, *i. e.* the one by granting the Blessings which they sue for; and the other by pouring out on the Head of such profane Wretches, that Vengeance and Damnation which they are so forward to call down for others. What was alledged by the blind Man whom our Saviour restored to Sight, *that God heareth not Sinners*, is thus far true indeed, that he does not so far hear, as to regard or accept them, but their Prayer is an Abomination to him, instead of a Sacrifice. Not that he is really ignorant of what they say, nor is there a Word in their Tongue, but he knoweth

a proper Ground for coming to God. 53

knoweth it altogether. And in like Man-^{SERM.}
ner are we to understand the Words of the ^{II.}
Psalmist, Psal. lxvi. 16. If I regard Ini-
quity with mine Heart, the Lord will not
hear me ; as much as to say, if I venture
to approach him, without a due Prepara-
tion of Heart and Soul, with polluted
Hands and a corrupted Mind, if I do not
first sincerely confess and bewail my Sins,
and form holy Resolutions of Amend-
ment for the Time to come, before I
presume to implore the Mercies I stand in
Need of, my most earnest Intreaties will
be of no Account, I shall be looked upon by
him as an idle Babler, and shall never obtain
any of my Desires. So proper and reason-
able is it always to begin our Prayers
with a Confession of our Sins. For unre-
pent Sin is a certain Bar to God's Fa-
vour, and till that Obstruction be remo-
ved, we may be assured, that whatever
we ask we shall ask in vain. But if we
will first wash our Hands in Innocency,
we may then with Confidence appear be-
fore him, and may depend upon it, that
he will both hear and answer our Pe-
titions. But,

54 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. II. Idly, I AM now to shew, that this

II. is a Property belonging to God alone. *THOU* emphatically, and no other, *art a God that bearest Prayer*: I mean, there is no other but God, that can either hear or judge of the Sincerity of internal and mental Prayer. He only understands the Language of the Heart, and the Meaning of that which is yet unuttered. He only can listen to all Supplicants at once, let them be never so disjoined in Place, or let their Wants be never so various and disagreeing. And none but he can so hear, as to be able to answer and relieve them all.

WE Mortals indeed are capable, in some little Measure, of understanding one another's Wants, of receiving Petitions from our Fellow Creatures, and offering our own to them: We are capable too, in some Degree, of relieving one another, and complying with the Requests that are made to us. But this our Power is greatly limited and restrained. We can hearken but to a few Petitioners at a Time, and it is but to a small Part of them, to whose Necessities we are able to apply the proper
Re-

a proper Ground for coming to God. 55

Remedies. We can no otherwise discover what it is they stand in Need of, but by outward Expressions and Significations: Nor does it always happen that we are sufficiently in Humour, or that we have so much Humanity about us, as will incline us to supply those Needs that have been fully represented to us, and which according to the Ability wherewith God has been pleased to prosper us, we are abundantly able to alleviate and make easy.

SOMETIMES too it may so fall out, that even those who have the largest Capacity of doing good, and who withal are ever ready to hear as many as they can, and ever inclinable to grant to as many as they do hear, are hindered from applying their Benevolence where it is most wanted and best deserved, by the Forwardness and Importunity of less worthy Persons, who by crafty Suggestions and false Representations, divert to their own Benefit those Streams of Favour, which were designed to flow in a much better Channel, and fatten on the Spoils of the modest and unheard.

56 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. THESE Inconveniencies and Inequalities
 II. are unavoidable in the Course of human
 Affairs, nor is it possible for the greatest
 Sagacity or sharpest Penetration wholly to
 guard against them. For Men can but
 judge according to the best outward Ap-
 pearances that offer themselves, and the
 best Information they can procure. But as
 those Appearances and that Information
 are not always agreeable to the Nature of
 Things ; hence many Mistakes and Mis-
 understandings arise. When our Rule its
 self becomes thus deceitful, we must of
 Necessity err. But our Comfort is, that
 Error, when it is thus unavoidable, is ne-
 ver sinful.

GOD only is omniscient and unerring.
 It is he alone that cannot be imposed on
 by any deceitful and imperfect Views. He
 clearly discerns between real Merit and
 specious Plausibility. He sees the artful
 Turns and colourable Pretences that are
 given to ill-grounded Requests, the secret
 Springs from whence they proceed, and the
 latent Reserves wherewith they are attended.
 He hears all his Addressers equally, and all
 thoroughly ; they may always be sure of
 an

a proper Ground for coming to God. 57

an easy Access and favourable Audience. SERM.

He will so direct and proportion his Gifts, II.

that what is bestowed on one shall be no Detriment to another, and will so order Events, that no one who makes a due Application, shall want any Thing that is fit and convenient for him. To whom then can we so properly betake ourselves for the obtaining any of our reasonable Desires, as to that Benefactor who is able to do all Things, to whose Presence we are at all Times sure to be admitted, and who, we know, will never reject, nor send us away empty? *O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all Flesh come.* Which brings me to consider,

III^{dly}, THE Reasonableness and Force of the Inference drawn from the Assertion I have been proving. *Because he heareth Prayer, therefore shall all Flesh come unto him.* The Probability or Prospect of Success is, next to the Worthiness of the End we pursue, one of the chief Things to be considered in all human Actions. To attempt Things impossible, or such as are very hardly to be attained, tho' the Objects in themselves may be well worth

58 *The Character of bearing Prayer,*

SERM. worth the possessing, will cause any Man's

II. Discretion to be call'd in Question. To ask a considerable Favour of a Person, in whom one has no Manner of Interest, nor the least Acquaintance with him, and where one is morally assured of meeting with a Refusal, is such a Piece of Conduct as is peculiar to the worthless and the bold, but which no Person of Modesty or Sense will care to venture on. Or let the Thing to be requested be never so just and reasonable, and he of whom we would ask it never so well known to us, yet if we know him to be of a rigid and inflexible Temper, spiteful and envious, churlish and morose, and one who is naturally averse to doing good Offices, and contributing to the Happiness of others, and who takes a Pleasure in denying the most ordinary Favours and Matters of common Civility; this will sufficiently warrant our Backwardness in applying to him, nor ought we to be taxed with being wanting to our selves or to our Friends, if we forbear to ask, where our Hopes of prevailing are so very small.

BUT

a proper Ground for coming to God. 59

BUT then on the other Hand, where SERM.
a very slight Application will be sure to II.
procure us very great Advantages, where
we have a candid and ingenuous Disposition to deal with, a Lover of Mankind, and one who delights in being serviceable and beneficial, when we have no more to do, but to open our Case to him, and make him sensible how much it is in his Power to make us happy and easy, and have all imaginable Reason to conclude, that the Request will be as soon granted as desired; in this Case, we are guilty of the most inexcusable Folly, and may be justly looked upon as the wilful Authors of our own Misery, if we neglect so easy and obvious a Remedy.

Now this is the Case between our Creator and us. We have not only a Probability, but a Certainty of succeeding in our Petitions to him. There is Nothing that he is not able to give us, and Nothing convenient that he is not willing. He never with-holds his Blessings from us out of Envy or ill Humour. We depend, in all that we seek from him, on no Uncertainty of Temper, we have none of those softer
Hours

60 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. Hours to watch, when he is most easy to

II.  be approached, which we are forced to observe with regard to our earthly Benefactors. And yet, stupid and ungrateful as we are, how much more careless and remiss are we in our Carriage toward him, than toward the meanest of those from whom we expect any temporal Advantage ! With how exact an Observance do we attend their Motions, how careful to slip no Opportunity of careressing them, how fearful of doing any thing to disoblige them ! But as for our supreme Lord, on whose Will alone both our present and eternal Welfare depends, with what a cold Indifference do we treat him ! When we have nothing else to do, when we labour under outward Pressures, are bereft of all worldly Comforts, and have no other Resort to fly to, we perhaps betake ourselves for Sanctuary to him. But in the mean time we put him on the petitioning Side, and while we should be courting him to grant us his Benefits, he is in vain courting us to receive them. He calls and invites us, while we are flying from him, and when we should entreat

a proper Ground for coming to God. 61

treat him to be reconciled to us, he earnestly beseeches us to be reconciled to him. SERM.
II.

Is such a Behaviour as this toward one so potent, and to whose Disposal we are so absolutely subject, agreeable to the Maxims of common Policy, or do we act thus inconsiderately in any other Matters, but in the great Concern of our everlasting Salvation? Is it not natural and almost mechanical for us thither to cast our most wistful Looks and passionate Regards from whencesoever our Support and Maintenance comes? If in any Case we are sensible of our own Want and Indigence, does it not of Course prompt us to have Resort to such as we know are best able to supply that Want? Thus our Experience tells us it is in the common Occurrences of Life, the greater the Abundance is, the more needy Followers it will be sure to draw, *and wheresoever the Carcass is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.* When there was Corn no where but in *Egypt*, *Egypt* was the Place of Resort for all that were oppressed with Famine.

SINCE then we know our selves to stand in Need of continual Supplies, both
of

62 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. of temporal and spiritual Blessings, since

II.  we have occasion not only for bodily Refreshments from Time to Time, but, which is much more material, we find in our selves a Decay of our spiritual Strength, a Deficiency in every Grace and Virtue, and such a Waste of Spirits in our inward Man, as can only be supplied by that God, who has promised to grant us these and all other Blessings we will pray for, and who we are sure is abundantly able to perform his Promises ; is it not clear, that, for this Reason, we should make our Supplications to him ?

ARE we not poor enough, and sufficiently devoid of Grace, to perceive we stand in Need of such Assistance ? Or are we so blind, so ill instructed, and unacquainted with our own Privilege, as not to know where this Assistance is to be had, and to whom we must apply ourselves for it ? Or knowing all this, and that upon our due Application we may find Help and Relief, nay, not only that, but the most enlivening Joy and Comfort, are we yet so wilfully stubborn and regardless of our own Happiness, as not to fly

a proper Ground for coming to God. 63

fly to him for Succour, and beg to have SERM.
all our inward Breaches repaired by the II.
powerful Infusion of Divine Grace, and
the healing Virtue of his sanctifying Spi-
rit ?

How natural should it be for every one who reflects on his dependent Condition, and how unable he is to subsist one single Moment without the repeated Marks of Divine Goodness, to say, with the Holy Psalmist, *Unto thee lift I up mine Eyes, O thou that dwellest in the Heavens. Behold, as the Eyes of Servants look unto the Hand of their Masters, and as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hand of her Mistress, so our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have Mercy upon us !*

I HAVE shown you the Justness of the Inference or Conclusion in my Text, drawn from God's Readiness to hear and Willingness to save, that therefore *all Flesh should come* (and may they all be so wise as to come) in a suppliant Manner, unto him. Let us now in the

IVth and last Place, Consider this Argument by way of Reverse, and see how unreasonable and vain a Thing it is, to
come

64 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. come unto any Being, *i. e.* to call unto

II. any Being for Help or Succour, that cannot hear our Prayer. As the Prospect of Success is a very proper Inducement to any Enterprize, (as I before observed to you) and goes a great Way toward denominating it wise and rational, and well-grounded, so on the contrary, the engaging in such Methods of Action as can serve to no Purpose, and where their Labour is sure, or at least very likely to miscarry, most deservedly exposes such Undertakers to the Imputation of Vanity and Folly. And there is no greater Instance of such vain and fruitless Labour, than praying to those who can neither hear, nor help us, if they could hear.

SUCH was the Worship of the old Heathen Idolaters, which we find so often exposed in the Book of Psalms and in the Prophets. *They have no Knowledge, says God himself by the Mouth of Isaiah, they have no Knowledge, that set up the Wood of their graven Image, and pray unto a God that cannot save.* How strangely were Men infatuated, and how extravagant a Project was it, to worship Creatures

tures of their making instead of their **SERM.**
Creator, to pay Divine Honours to a Piece
of Wood or Stone, in Confidence of Fa-
vour and Assistance from them, to pray
for Life to Things Inanimate, and for
Strength to that, which they see is una-
ble to support it self? How well does the
Psalmist observe, *that they who make such*
Idols, are like unto them, and so are all they
that put their Trust in them, i. e. they who
could have so little Sense as to persuade
themselves that the Work of their own
Hands had any real Power to bestow on
them any Benefit, or preserve them from
any Danger, were as stupid and void of
Reason. as the very Image they adored.
Such Worshippers, with those of *Baal*,
might cry aloud from Morning until Eve-
ning, saying, *O Baal, hear us*, they might
cut themselves, after their Manner, with
Knives and Lancets, or torment themselves
after any other Manner that mistaken Su-
perstition has invented; but there would
be neither Voice, nor any to answer, nor
any that regardeth. Nor did they find it
more availing to pay their Adoration to
the Sun or Moon, or Planets, or any of
the Host of Heaven, nor to any remark-

66 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. II. able Person deceased, whom ignorant Zeal or corrupt Flattery, or some worse Cause, had recommended to the deluded World under the Title and Character of a God.

BUT blessed be God, Mens Eyes are at this Time better opened, they have cast off the Belief of those imaginary Powers, and are generally agreed in acknowledging the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. And yet it were to be wished, that all who profess to believe the Unity of the Godhead, were equally zealous in asserting his undoubted Rights and Properties ; that they would not give his Honour to another, nor impart that Adoration that is due to him, and to him alone, to any created Being.

BUT herein the Church of *Rome* is notoriously to blame, which so far retains the Leaven of *Heathen Rome*, as to injoin her Members, under Pain of Damnation, to adore and pray to departed Saints and Angels, in direct Opposition to our blessed Saviour's Doctrine, where he quotes a Passage of the *Old Testament*, and makes it a Command of the *New* by his Repetition of it. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy*

a proper Ground for coming to God. 67

thy God, and him only shalt thou serve: SERM.

And to that of St. Paul, Let no Man be-
guile you of your Reward, in a voluntary

H.

Humility, and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those Things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly Mind.

And we read that St. John, when he would have worshipped the Angel that shewed him the Things he has recorded in his Revelations, was forbid by him to do it, and required to direct his Adoration to none but the Almighty.

And when I had heard and seen, says he, I fell down to worship before the Feet of the Angel, which shewed me these Things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy Fellow-Servant, and of thy Brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the Sayings of this Book. Worship God.

Much might be said to shew how injurious this Practice is to God, how it robs him of his Honour, and argues a Distrust of his Goodness and All-sufficiency, and of the Efficacy of our Saviour's Mediation, whilst they dare not trust to that alone, but seek out other Intercessors, as if it were to strengthen their Interest with God, and add a greater

68 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. Weight to that which he urges in their
II. Behalf.

BUT setting aside the Unlawfulness of the Thing, it will be more to my present Purpose to consider, how insignificant and vain it is, and how little Service it can do us. We are not sure they hear us, but we are sure we can be heard without them, and that God can understand our Thoughts, without the Assistance of any created Substance. Why then should we go out of our Way in praying to them to pray for us, when we may apply ourselves, and are encouraged so to do, immediately to God? Nor are we any where in Scripture exhorted to approach him through any other Mediator but his beloved Son. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you,* are his own Words. He does not say, *Whatsoever you shall desire such a Saint or such an Angel to ask the Father, shall be granted.* As to the holy Angels, we have Reason indeed to conclude that they are not wholly unacquainted with human Affairs. We are told they are ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for those that shall
be

a proper Ground for coming to God. 69

be Heirs of Salvation. We know they SERM.
have frequently been employed in the De- II.
livery of Messages from God to Man, and
we have good Authority to believe that
they are often set as a Guard about good
Men, to deliver them from Harm, and
watch for their Preservation. But it is
much more certain, that as they are but
finite Beings, they cannot be every where
present at one and the same Time, nor
have we any Rule whereby we can judge
when any one of them is present with us;
we know not which of them it is, by what
Name he is called, to what Rank or Or-
der of Angels he belongs, how long he
makes his Abode with us, or whether he
attends us in all our Motions, whether we
are accompanied by one as our constant and
standing Guardian, or whether they re-
lieve one another, and take care of us by
Succession; whether the same Person is
under the Inspection of different Angels,
or the same Angel has the Tuition of diffe-
rent Persons. These are Points of which
we are wholly ignorant, and of which we
have no possible Means of being informed,
since the Scripture is silent about them:

70 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. And consequently under this Uncertainty,

II. if we pray to Angels, we pray to we know not whom, and misplace our Devotion that might be much better employed, in representing our Wants there, from whence only they can be supplied a shorter and a nearer Way.

BUT then as touching the Saints, *i. e.* those holy Persons that have departed in the Faith, our Uncertainty is yet greater, and the Invocation of them more preposterous. They are supposed to be in Heaven, and can be no otherwise privy to our State, but as God is pleased to impart it to them; they know it not to be sure by immediate Intuition, for then they would be omniscient, like God. And by Consequence they cannot know when we pray to them but by Communication from God. And is it reasonable to suppose that God Almighty is to acquaint the Virgin *Mary*, or *St. Peter*, or *St. Paul*, that such a Christian in such a Place, or such a Congregation of Christians desires one of them to intercede with himself in their Behalf?

WHETHER or no *the Souls of the Faithful, after they are delivered from the*
Bur-

a proper Ground for coming to God. 71

Burden of the Flesh, have any Knowledge SERM.
II.
at all of what we do below, has been al-

ways a Matter of Dispute, it has been doubted by some, and denied by others, and is like to be fully determined by none, till the militant and triumphant Church shall be united, and that will not be till the general Resurrection. In the mean Time, though we may think the affirmative Side of the Question the more probable, and see better Reasons to incline us to believe that they do interest themselves in our Affairs, than that they are wholly unconcerned about us, yet as we have no Assurance that they can hear the Addresses we make to them, and as we have no Need of such Mediators to make our Requests known to God, this can be no sufficient Ground either to authorize or persuade us to offer up our Supplications to them.

I SPEAK this even on a Supposal that those to whom we address ourselves, are real Saints, and certainly among the Number of the blessed, which is more than we can absolutely pronounce of any others but those whose Names are recorded in

72 *The Character of bearing Prayer, &c.*

SERM. the Book of Life. As for the most seem-

II. ingly innocent and righteous Persons besides, we can but charitably suppose them to be in Heaven; but can have no Security that they are so. And therefore, considering how we Men are liable to be deceived in our Judgment of one another, and how often a counterfeit Devotion has passed upon the World, how dangerous as well as absurd a Thing is it, to pray to one as a Saint in Heaven, who for ought we know may be tormented in Hell? And I cannot but add, that there are too many Saints of the Pope's making, who, we have reason to fear, have had no better a Portion assign'd them. And, as we hope for a better, let us be tender of God's Prerogative, and forbear to give the Honours that are peculiar to him, to any created Being. *Let us render to God, the Things that are God's*, and neither neglect to call upon him for Help, nor betake ourselves to any other.

To that eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, &c.

SERMON



SERMON III.

The Duty of Publick Prayer, and
Excellency of the *English* Liturgy.



ROM. xii. 12.

— *continuing instant in Prayer.*



AMONG many other necessary SERM.
III.
and useful Rules to be observed
by every good Christian in the
Conduct of his Life and Man-
ners, the Apostle lays down this of *conti-
nuing in Prayer*, and that *instantly*, or,
as he elsewhere expresses it, *without ceas-
ing*, as a most important and indispensable
Duty; intending by those Expressions of
instant and *incessant Prayer*, not that Men
should give themselves up so entirely to
Devotion,

74 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. Devotion, as wholly to neglect all the other

III. Offices and Duties of Life, and render themselves useless and unserviceable to the Community whereof they are Members, or to abandon all their Civil, Natural, and Political Engagements. But that they should constantly retain a Spirit of Devotion, and preserve an habitual Readiness of applying themselves to the Throne of Grace on every emergent Occasion: That they should diligently observe the stated Times both of publick and private Prayer: That they should possess themselves with a pious and affectionate Sense of God's Power and Willingness to help them: That they should look upon Him as the Sovereign Author of every good and perfect Gift, the supreme Disposer of their Fate, and the sole Director of all Events that befall them, whether they come as Blessings or as Punishments: That they should receive Good at His Hands with a sincere and humble Gratitude, and Evil with a quiet and patient Submission: That they should always be ready furnished with pathetic and devout Ejaculations, fit to express their most hearty Praise and Thanks for the Mercies

Excellency of the English Liturgy. 75

Mercies he bestows on them, their modest SERM.
Resignation to his Will under those Af- III.
flictions, wherewith he is pleased to visit
them, either for the Exercise of their Pa-
tience, or as a Chastisement for their Sins,
such as are fit for the imploring in all their
Straits and Pressures His Divine Favour
and Protection, and the powerful Assis-
tances of His preventing and enlivening
Grace, as also for the deprecating His
Wrath and Vengeance, the hiding the
Light of his Countenance from them, and
finally with-drawing His Holy Spirit.

ALTHOUGH then we are not required
to spend our whole Lives in one continued
Series of actual Prayer, without any In-
termission; yet the Habit of Prayer must
never cease. Though the Fire of Devot-
ion need not always blaze out, though
it may be covered and concealed at pro-
per Seasons; yet must it never be totally
extinguished: The Embers at least must
be always glowing, and in a constant Rea-
diness to be blown up into a Flame, as
Opportunity shall offer, and Need require.

THOUGH a good Christian may be con-
versant in other Places, besides the Closet
and

76 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. and the Church, and may without any

III. Offence to God, and without robbing him of his Honour, be occupied about his lawful Occasions, or amuse himself in harmless and innocent Diversions; yet even in the midst of Business or Recreations, he may find room for pious Thoughts, and a grateful Reflection on the Goodness of that God, to whose kind Indulgence he is indebted for the Means and Opportunities that are afforded him of performing either.

THE Devotion of the best inclined and most religious Persons would by Degrees begin to flag and tire, if it were bound without any Relaxation to keep up constantly to the highest Pitch, and were not allowed to let it self down in order to recover fresh Strength and Vigour. But though it is not obliged to be always on the Wing, it must ever be prepared for a new Flight, and, like a watchful Centinel, not only diligently observe the set Times of Duty, but be ready to take the first Alarm, in Case of any sudden and extraordinary Call.

IN

IN this Sense it is the Duty of every SERM.
Christian, according to the Advice of our III.
Apostle in my Text, to *continue instant in*
Prayer: to the constant and sincere Ex-
ercise whereof, that I may the more ef-
fectually incite you, I shall endeavour to
make good the following Propositions.

First, That Prayer in general is both
our indispensable Duty, and our in-
estimable Privilege.

Secondly, That the publick Invocation
of God in Religious Assemblies, is an
acceptable and requisite Service.

Thirdly, That it is not only lawful, but
the most expedient Manner of cele-
brating such publick Worship, when
we call upon God in a set Form of
Prayer.

Fourthly, That the Form prescribed in
the Liturgy of the Church of *Eng-
land*, is as wise and judicious, as full
and comprehensive, as inoffensive and
unexceptionable a Form, as ever any
Church was blest with, since the best
and earliest Ages of Christianity.

I SHALL

78 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. I SHALL say little at this Time of our

III. *Obligation to private Prayer in particular,*
 which I may take another Occasion of enlarging on; as also of the several Parts whereof it consists, the Qualifications necessary for a true Supplicant, and the Rules to be observed in the Discharge of that Duty. The Points I have already proposed being more proper and natural for me to insist on at this Time, as a Confirmation of the Willingness of that Subscription and Declaration of Conformity to the Use of the Liturgy, which I have lately been called to make, in Respect of the Station I hold here, of that Assent and Consent to the Book of *Common Prayer*, which I have been required by lawful Authority openly and publickly to declare.

I BEGIN then with my first Assertion, That Prayer in general is both our indispensable Duty, and our inestimable Privilege.

THE next Step to our acknowledging the Existence of a God, is our worshipping and adoring him, and seeking to him for those Necessaries which we are sensible we want, and he alone can give us.

THERE

Excellency of the English Liturgy. 79

THERE have been few who believed any SERM.
III. Thing of a divine Being, who have not carried their Religion thus far. This Nature itself could teach the Heathens who were guided by no other Light, and in vain would it have taught them that there was a Deity, if it had not been in Order to the imploring his Assistance: they found their Condition was frail and impotent, that they laboured under many Defects and Disabilities, which they could not possibly remedy by all the Force and Power of their natural Faculties; and perceiving there was an All-wise and All-sufficient Being, who both knew their Infirmities, and was able to relieve them; the Case was very obvious, that the Way to obtain that Relief, must be by humbly petitioning for it. It was a plain Indication to them that the great Dispenser of Blessings, by sometimes stopping his Hand, and withholding the Things they stood in Need of, and at other Whiles pouring them out in great Abundance, had some Regard to the Behaviour of those that depended on him, that something was to be done by them in Order to procure them, and they could think

80 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. think of no Expedient so proper and natural, as suing and entreating for those Favours as a free and voluntary Gift, for which they were sensibly convinced they were able to make no Manner of Requit-
 III. tal to an infinitely perfect Being, who stood in no Need of their Service, and could receive no Benefit from any Thing they could offer him.

THUS far I say the very Heathens themselves were convinced of the Obligation to Prayer. But we Christians have much higher Demonstrations of it, both from the bright and memorable Patterns that have been set us by the most renowned Assertors of the Faith we profess, whose Flights of Devotion and elevated Piety are recorded to their eternal Honour in the sacred Writings; and also from many positive Precepts and Injunctions, where we are not only required to pray instantly and incessantly, *and without Fainting*, but moreover *are taught how to pray*. Where it is imposed on us as a Condition of receiving, that we first ask, and where we see the happy Effects of such asking exemplified in divers Instances, and those Instances urged

Excellency of the English Liturgy. 81

urged as an Encouragement to the Duty, SERM.
III.
as when St. James tells us, *that Elias was a Man of like Infirmities with ourselves, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it did not rain for the Space of Three Years and six Months:* who also makes this general Observation, that the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.

I MIGHT transcribe a greater Part of the Scripture than would fill this Discourse, should I mention all the Directions and Enforcements to this Duty. But I shall add but one more for all the rest, and that is the Practice of our blessed Saviour, who we know, prayed frequently and fervently to his Father: and he that after such an Example can think himself absolved from the Necessity of praying, must persuade himself that he has fewer Frailties and Infirmities, or greater Strength and Sufficiency than the blessed and immaculate Son of God.

BUT suppose now that Prayer were not regarded of us as a Duty, were it only permitted and indulged to us, we have all imaginable Reason to embrace it as our highest Privilege.

82 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. FOR Men in the most distressed and miserable Condition, naked and destitute of all
 III. Comfort, full of Wants and Necessities, and, which is worst of all, burden'd with a heavy Load of Guilt, from which they are unable to free themselves, and which unless it be taken off must unavoidably sink them to the bottomless Pit; for such Men I say to be told of a plain and easy Remedy, by which they may free themselves from all their Misery, and be advanced to a State of Joy and Happiness, one would think should be no unwelcome News, and that they should need but little Persuasion to accept of the Deliverance that is offered them.

AND yet such a Remedy is Prayer, and this is offered to every Man as a sure Expedient, let his spiritual or temporal Wants be never so great and pressing. We have our Saviour's own Word for it, *that whatever we ask the Father in his Name, he will give us.*

HEREBY we are admitted to the Honour of holding an Intercourse with God himself, who vouchsafes to receive us into his Presence, allows us to open our Wants

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to him, and attentively listens to our Sup-
plications : he suffers us to challenge the
Performance of his Promises, and to urge
the gracious Offers he has made to re-
penting Sinners.

SERM.
III.

IN a Word, this is so honourable, and
may be made so delightful a Task, that
there needs no Force or Compulsion to it,
were it not that some Men are so wilfully
stiff-necked and perverse, that as they are
fond of many Things, which are really
unpleasant and disagreeable, as well as wick-
ed, merely because they are forbidden ; so
on the other Hand, they take up an un-
reasonable Aversion to Prayer, though ex-
ceedingly pleasant and full of Joy and Con-
solation in itself, for no other Cause but
because it is a Duty.

I AM now to prove, in the

Second Place, That the publick Invoca-
tion of God in religious Assemblies, is
an acceptable and requisite Service.

OUR Saviour has sufficiently testified his
good liking of such Worship, by declaring,
*that wherever two or three are gathered to-
gether in his Name, there is he in the midst*

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SERM. of *them*, and the more are assembled, the

III. greater Delight does he take in them, and
 the more is he inclined to grant those
 Requests, which are jointly offered by a
 great Number of devout and pious Souls.
 So many unanimous Petitioners agreeing
 in the same Desires, and breathing out the
 same Wishes, do, as it were, offer a Sort
 of pleasing Violence to the Kingdom of
 Heaven, and such violent Men take it by
 the Force of Prayer.

IT was when the Apostles were assembled together, and making their common Supplications, while they were all with one Accord in one Place, that the Holy Ghost fell on them. And the same divine Spirit rested on 3000 at a Time, who had formed themselves into a Congregation, and were listning to *St. Peter*.

AND we meet with a remarkable Instance of our Saviour's Zeal against such as profaned the Temple, where such Congregations were appointed to be held, when he urged a Passage out of the Old Testament, where God's House is peculiarly stiled *the House of Prayer*, in Justification of his Proceeding, when he took upon him

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him to drive out from it, such as were so irreverent as to turn it into a Market or an Exchange. SERM.
III.

Now although there were other religious Offices to be performed in the Temple, such as sacrificing, reading, and expounding the Law, &c. yet we may learn from that signal Elogy that is here given to publick Prayer, that that is to be esteem'd the chief and principal Part of the divine Worship, for the Performance whereof in a more convenient and decent Manner, the Temple, and for the same Reason our Christian Churches, were peculiarly erected, and separated from profane Uses, that holy and devout Persons might know whither to resort, like Soldiers to their Standard, to perform their common Duty, and represent their common Wants.

WHAT a high Reverence and Value does Holy *David* express for the House of God, and what an ardent Desire that his Condition would allow him to make his constant Abode there, and never depart from it, where he could be contented even with the humble Office of a Door-keeper! and, in the *New Testament* too, we

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SERM. have the Practice both of our Saviour and
 III. his Disciples, who we read after his Ascension were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God. And the Apostle gives it as an expresse Charge, that Christians should not forsake the assembling themselves together, and at the same Time passes a Censure on those that did so.

Now that the Practice of the Church was agreeable to this Precept, we have Proofs enough both from Scripture and Antiquity. We find the Apostles directing what should be done in their Assemblies, and reprovins what was done amiss there, prescribing Rules for their Behaviour, and the Exercise of their several Gifts, forbidding Women to teach, and those who might lawfully officiate to pray in an unknown Tongue; and where some particular Cases might happen, which were not sufficiently provided for, requiring them to observe these general Instructions, that every Thing should be done to edifying, with Decency and in Order.

FROM these and many other Proofs it is very clear and indisputable, that not only in the *Jewish*, but *Christian* Church, ever

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ever since the first Foundation of it, God SERM.
III.
has been worshipped in Religious Assemblies. And we may be largely convinced by the Writings of the old Apologists and Ecclesiastical Historians, how indefatigably zealous the primitive Christians were in the Celebration of this Duty; insomuch that when they laboured under the severest Persecutions, and were forbid to meet together, under Pain of the most exquisite Torture, no Suffering could discourage, no Terrors affright them from it.

WHEN they were so narrowly watched, that it was impracticable to be done by Day, they would repair by Night to some appointed Place, where they might join their united Prayers to God, that he would commiserate the suffering Estate of his Church, and either release them from those Oppressions under which they groaned, if it should be his good Pleasure, or else enable them with Courage and Constancy to undergo the fiery Trial, and sustain the utmost Torments that could be inflicted on them, rather than deny the Faith, and apostatize from that holy Profession in which they had engaged themselves.

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SERM. selves. Ever, before they parted, com-

III. memorating the Death and Passion of their
gracious Redeemer, according to his own
most holy Institution.

WE have heard much of a like Zeal and Firmness in our own Times among the persecuted Protestants in a neighbouring Country, who would run all Hazards, rather than lose an Opportunity of meeting with others of the same Persuasion, and the same pious Disposition, to worship God after their own Manner.

AND indeed it is too sad a Truth, that the Members of an oppressed and persecuted Church, have at all Times been more eager and forward to embrace all possible Opportunities of assembling themselves together for the Performance of religious Acts, notwithstanding all the Dangers they were exposed to, than those who may do it with Ease and Safety ; who have a settled Ministry, fixed Hours, open Churches, and not only the Allowance, but the Command of the Civil Power to repair thither.

THE Case is but too visible, how a hundred lazy Pretences of Business or Company,

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pany, or feigned Indispositions, or even a SERM.
little Wet or Cold, will serve to keep a- III.
way the one; whilst Storms and Tempests,
Fire and Sword, Racks and Wheels, were
all too little to deter the other.

HAVING observed thus much concerning publick Prayer, I pass on to my

Third Proposition, viz. That it is not only lawful, but the most expedient Manner of celebrating such publick Worship, when we call upon God in a set Form of Prayer.

If there were any Thing in a Form of Prayer that was simply evil, there would not be so many Forms prescribed in the *Old Testament*, as we meet with there, among which we may reckon the whole Book of *Psalms*, which were appointed to be sung in the publick Service, and composed for that very Use, as the Titles of many of them set forth; nor would our Saviour himself have prayed by a Form, as he evidently did, when he prayed three several Times in the same Words. Nay, on the Cross it self he prayed by a Form, when he cried in the very Words of the
Twenty-

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SERM. Twenty-second Psalm, *My God ! my God !*

III. *Why hast Thou forsaken me ?* Nor would he have taught his Disciples a Form, and required them, when they prayed, to use those very Words.

IT is a very weak and frivolous Cavil, that is urged on the other Hand, that our Saviour did not intend that which we call the *Lord's Prayer*, as a Form that should be used without Variation, or in the very Words we find it, but only as a Model or Directory, according to which our Prayers should be fashioned.

THERE might indeed be something of a better Colour for this Pretence, if that excellent Prayer were to be met with but once in the Scripture, and that only in St. *Matthew's Gospel*, where it is introduced with an *ὕτως προσεύχεσθε*, *pray ye thus*, or, *after this Manner*, as we have rendered it. Though even that Expression, supposing there were no other correspondent Passage to explain it, might naturally enough imply a Direction to keep to those Words, as well as to the Substance of them.

BUT the Point is clear beyond all Exception, from the Gospel of St. *Luke*, where

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where the Lord's Prayer is ushered in with SERM.
this prefatory Sentence, *When ye pray, say,* III.
Our Father, &c. 

WHAT therefore Christ himself has positively enjoined, and his Disciples and their Disciples for so many hundred Years have practised, cannot be unlawful.

BUT they tell us, that though there should be nothing sinful in Forms of Prayer, yet that they are not so edifying, nor can they be so well adapted to the several Occasions that may arise, as Prayers that are conceived at the same Instant they are uttered, without Study or Pre-meditation, which may be accommodated to any sudden and unforeseen Case: That the tying Men up to Forms and Phrases is stinting and limiting the Spirit, and that it cools the Affection, and slackens the Devotion both of Minister and People.

To all which it may be answered,

1st. THAT praying by a set Form is much more likely to tend to Edification, than extempore Effusions. For when both the Minister and People are acquainted before-hand with what they are going to say,

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SERM. say, they can pray with more Understanding, and be better assured that they perform an acceptable Service, than when both the Matter and Expression are entirely new, and sometimes it is to be feared, such as neither the one would have uttered upon mature Deliberation, nor the other have said *Amen* to, if they had Time to recollect themselves, and consider what improper Things had been requested in their Name, or how irreverently and over-familiarly they had made their Addresses to Almighty God, with other Abuses of the like Nature.

AND as one that trusts to unstudied arbitrary Prayer, may be sometimes surprized into an unwarrantable Expression; so (which is a more frequent Case) he may omit many Things which were proper, nay highly necessary to be asked, whilst he enlarges with great Zeal and Fervency on others of less Moment.

BUT both these Inconveniences are avoided by following a prescribed and well-considered Form, where we are sure to desire nothing but what is fit and convenient, and that in the most reverent and decent

decent Terms, nor to omit any Thing SERM.
III.
that is so.

WHEN they object that in the Use of set Forms, the Mind is so fastened to the Words, that it cannot be affected with the Sense ; this may with much better Reason be retorted upon themselves. For, as to the Minister, let any one judge, whose Attention is most taken up with the Words, he that has Expressions to invent, and is busied in turning over his Imagination to seek for new Phrases, or he that only pronounces what is well invented already. And as for our People, who expect no Novelties, but a Repetition of the same Prayers which they familiarly know and understand, and which they have often successfully put up ; they have the more Leisure to affect themselves with the meaning of them, to raise their Thoughts, and join their Hearts and Souls to every Petition, and to expatiate and enlarge themselves in Holy Desires and Meditations, which is the Life and Soul of Prayer.

OH but these Prayers, they cry, must grow flat and insipid, and lose all their Force and Energy by our constant and daily

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SERM. daily Iteration of them. The People will

III. by Degrees be cloyed, and retain no Taste or Relish of them, when they hear and repeat nothing but the same Things they have heard and repeated a Thousand Times before.

BUT do we come together to please Men, or God? And can we think that He will be the better pleased for our Variety of Expression? Do we not stand in need of the same Blessings to Day as we did Yesterday? And if so, why may we not beg them in the same Terms?

BUT even with Regard to the People, there is no Reason to fear that any truly pious Soul will be distasted, or grow sick and weary of a well-composed Form of Prayer; but on the contrary will both like it the better, and edify the more by it, the longer he has used it.

THERE are Multitudes of good and holy Persons, who can testify this from their own Experience; and if there are any who are less warmly affected, who find their Devotions cool and flatten, for want of a more pleasing Variety; the Fault is not in the Prayers, but in the Indisposition

tion of their own Hearts ; it is because SERM.
they run them over as Words of Course, III.
without considering the Sense, and then
it is no Wonder if they do not edify.

BUT 2dly, It was before objected,
that set Forms of Prayer cannot so well be
adapted to the several Occasions that may
arise, as Extempore Prayer.

BUT to this I answer, That all the va-
rious Cases that may attend particular Per-
sons, cannot be specified at large, nor are
they so fit to be represented in the Church,
which can only pray for them in general
Terms : And in this Respect there is the
same Incapacity of providing for them,
whether the Congregation uses a Form,
or no.

AND as for such unexpected Events as
may befall the Church or Nation in gene-
ral, they may be (and are in our Liturgy)
provided for by a Collection of occasional
Prayers, to be applied or omitted as Rea-
son or Necessity requires.

3dly, ANOTHER Part of the Objection
against set Forms was, That it is a stinting
and limiting the Spirit. But I have shew-
ed before, that a Man who prays by a
Form

SERM. Form, may earnestly and devoutly intend
 III. the Matter of what he prays for, that he
 may have a fervent Zeal, enflamed Affec-
 tions, eager Desires, and a Delight in the
 Exercise of it, and that is the true Spirit
 of Prayer.

FAR be it from me to deny, that the
 Holy Spirit of God is always ready to
 further the good Motions and Tendencies
 of every sincere and godly Christian ; or
 that he affords a more peculiar Assistance
 to those who are making their Supplica-
 tions to God, and pouring out their Souls
 to him.

BUT then it is as certain, that he assists
 them only by his ordinary Operations, and
 not by those extraordinary and miraculous
 ones, which he exerted in the Apostles
 Days, the Continuance whereof was nei-
 ther promised to the Church, nor is ne-
 cessary for it, since its firm Establishment,
 and the Delivery of a written Rule, indi-
 cated by that very Spirit.

THE Help then we may expect from
 him in Prayer, is not the Gift of Utte-
 rance or Elocution, Fluency of Speech, or
 Force of Expression, but a Quickning of
 our

our Affections, stirring up of our Graces, SERM.
fixing our Attention, and exciting in us III.
such a flagrant Zeal and Earnestness, as
may make our Devotions acceptable to
God.

Now these Operations are not at all restrained or limited by a Form ; there is at least the same Room for the Spirit to exert it self, and it may act on the Soul with as vigorous an Influence, when the Prayers are ready prepared to our Hand, as when they are the Effect of a sudden Heat, and flow from extempore Conceptions.

IN short, if there be any Force in the Objection of our stinting the Spirit, when we confine ourselves to a Form, and not suffering him to guide us in the Matter and Manner of our Prayers, it must be grounded on this Principle : That whoever prays extempore, prays by the immediate Direction of the Spirit, *i. e.* by divine Inspiration ; and consequently that such Prayers are as true and authentick as the Scripture itself.

BUT will any one venture to assert this, who knows any thing of the Imperfecti-

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SERM. ons, the Improprieties, and (to say no

III. worfe) the little Levities, with which such Prayers are sometimes chargeable; and who farther considers that the different Sects who pretend to be thus gifted, do frequently take Occasion, in those Prayers, each of them to vent their own peculiar Notions, which are as opposite to each other, as all of them are to those of the established Church? And can any one believe that the Spirit of Truth itself is the Author and Inditer of such Contradictions?

I SHALL conclude this Head with the remarkable Concession of Mr. *Baxter*, a learned Divine of their own.

“ Is it not, says he, a high Degree of
 “ Pride, to conclude, that almost all Chri-
 “ stian Churches in the World, for these
 “ 1300 (he might have said upward of
 “ 1600) Years at least unto this Day, have
 “ offered such Worship to God, as that
 “ you are obliged to avoid it? and that
 “ almost all the Catholick Churches on
 “ Earth at this Day, are below your Com-
 “ munion for using Forms? And that
 “ even *Calvin* (and others whom he
 “ names.)

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“ names), and the old Non-conformists, SERM.
“ were unworthy your Communion? III.

Having said thus much in Justification
of Forms of Prayer in general, I now proceed to my

Fourth and Last Proposition: That the Form prescribed in the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, is as wise and judicious, as full and comprehensive, as inoffensive and unexceptionable a Form as ever any Church was blest with since the best and earliest Ages of Christianity.

It cannot be expected that in the little Remainder of my Discourse, I should run through all the several Offices of the Liturgy, and shew the peculiar Beauty and Excellence of each of them : Much less that I should set myself to vindicate it from every Cavil that unreasonable Men have raised against it.

THERE can be nothing so well and commendably devised, to which some Exception may not be taken by those who are resolved to find Fault. Nor is there any one Office, nay scarce a Sentence of

SERM. the Common Prayer that has escaped the

III. Censure of such Men.

It would hardly be believed by the devout Attendants on that Service, if the Objections were not too often and publicly urged, that many Parts of it which they have in the highest Veneration, and with which they feel themselves most sensibly affected, should prove an Offence to others, and keep them from our Communion.

'Tis scarce credible that any should quarrel with us for confessing to God that there is no Health in us: for praying against sudden Death: for begging of Christ that he would deliver us by the Mystery of his Holy Incarnation, with the other pathetic Motives in that and the following Suffrage of the *Litany*: for beseeching him that he would give to all Nations, Unity, Peace, and Concord; for declaring that with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven we laud and magnify his glorious Name: for begging of God that he would vouchsafe to give us those Things for the Worthiness of Christ, which for our own Unworthiness we dare

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dare not, and for our Blindness we cannot ask. SERM.
III.

I SHALL easily be excused from returning any Answer to these and the like Exceptions against particular Passages.

HOWEVER, before I go on to speak of the Beauties, I shall stay to wipe off some Stains, that seem to affect the main Bulk of the Liturgy. as,

I. THEY object that the greatest Part of it is taken out of the *Popish Mass-Book*. And what if it be so? Was not the *Mass-Book* itself in a great Measure collected from the purest ancient Liturgies that were preserved in the Church from the Apostolical Times? But as Popery prevailed, those excellent Forms were disguised and defaced by being intermixed with many corrupt and idolatrous Petitions, and clogged with an intolerable Burden of needless Ceremonies.

BUT our Liturgy, as it is now reformed, is restored to its primitive Splendor, those Abuses are taken away, and there is nothing remains that can be thought either Useless or Superstitious.

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SERM. AND what then can we desire more?

III. shall we make no Distinction between what is profitable and edifying, and that which is scandalous and profane? Or must we cast away the one for the Sake of the other? We have left the Church of *Rome* so far as it was erroneous and corrupt, but where we could lawfully and usefully conform to it, we did so. And it were well if all Christians would do the same, for the Sake of Peace and Unity.

UPON the whole then, since we have weeded up the Tares, and cast away the Chaff, we are very unjustly censured for gathering the Wheat into our Garners.

2. THEY find Fault that our Service is divided into so many short Collects, which they think would be more edifying, if it were one continued Prayer. Whereas there may be much better Reasons given for the Reverse of that Opinion. As that the Minds of the Congregation may be kept more intent, and be less subject to Distractions, when they frequently break off, and are called upon to answer; than when they bear no Part in the Service till it is all concluded. That the frequent Invo-
cation

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cation of God by some fresh Attribute, at SERM.
the Beginning of every Prayer, is a great III.
Help to Devotion, and puts us still in
Remembrance in whose Presence we are.
And that the frequent urging the Merits
and Mediation of Christ, as we do in the
End of each Collect, is the surest Way of
obtaining what we ask ; since whatever is
granted us, must be for the Sake of those
Merits, and by the Virtue of that Inter-
cession.

3, Another Objection, near of Kin to
the former, (and the last I shall mention)
is this ; they say it is disorderly for the
People to respond, or to repeat any Part of
the Service after the Minister, and that it
is an Intrenchment on his Office, who
is appointed to speak for the People,

In Answer to which it may be said, that
such Responsals are very ancient ; that the
People are directed in the Scripture to say
Amen, and are no where forbid to say
more ; that Psalms and Hymns and Spirit-
ual Songs are evidently composed for the
Use of the whole Congregation ; and that
the joining in such Praises is in Imitation
of the angelick Choir above ; that in the

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SERM. Confession of Sins, it is very proper for all

III. and every Person unanimously to express
 the Sense they have of their own Failings ;
 and that although it is the peculiar Office
 of the Minister to lead and invite them to
 pray, yet there is no Reason against, and a
 great many for their following and saying
 after him in some Parts of the Service.

THERE is one Consideration more in
 Reference to this Subject, which the Place
 itself, where I am now treating of it, does
 naturally suggest to me, and that is, the
 Manner of performing Divine Service
 in this and other Collegiate and Cathed-
 ral Churches, which, because it is cele-
 brated with Musick, has for that Reason
 been objected to us, not only as unwar-
 rantable and superstitious, but as a Vari-
 ation from our Rule, and a Breach of that
 Uniformity among ourselves, which we
 require of others, and for Default of which
 we tax them as Schismatical.

BUT why Superstitious ? What, because
 the *Romish* Mass is sung, and whatsoever
 resembles their Practice, must necessarily
 be, as such, erroneous and superstitious ?
 But if this Rule were to determine us, we
 must

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must not call upon God, we must not SEEM,
adore the Trinity, we must not pray, nor III.
preach, nor even observe the Command-
ments; for all these Things the Papists do,
or pretend to do, as well as we.

How foul a Reflection do these Objec-
tors cast on Holy *David* himself, and the
other Composers of the Book of *Psalms*,
which (as I observed before) were com-
posed for the Use of the whole Congrega-
tion, and were not only sung, but accom-
panied with musical Instruments of various
Kinds, as appears from many Passages of
the *Psalms* themselves, where the Assist-
ance of such Instruments is called for! Shall
we suppose then the devout and inspired
Psalmist, when he ordered the Trumpet
to be blown up, to have required the
sounding an Alarm to Superstition?

NAY, shall we cast the same Imputa-
tion even on our blessed Lord, when he
sung an Hymn with his Disciples, or when
he worshiped in the Temple at *Jerusalem*?
Instead of which, if he had thought Church
Musick as great an Abomination, as some
who in modern Times have born his
Name, may we not well presume, that,
in

SERM. in the Zeal of his Heart for the Purity of

III. that Temple, he would have drove out
the Singers and Musicians, as greater Profaners of his Father's House, as those who had made it less a House of Prayer, and more a Den of Thieves than the Money-Changers and Sellers of Doves.

NOR can any thing be more frivolous than what is alledged, that this is a Breach of our Rule, and contrary to Uniformity. For our Rule itself has made a plain Provision for this Manner of Celebration, when both in the Title of the Book, and in the Rubricks this Expression so often occurs, *to be said or sung*. Now where such an Alternative is proposed, he that complies with either Branch of it, discharges his Trust faithfully, and is guilty of no Violation. The pretended Dissonancy therefore between Choral and Parochial Service can have no Weight with any one, who considers that both the one and the other are within the Limits of that one regular Form and Method, by which we are directed to guide ourselves in the publick Worship of God. It happens pretty often in our Liturgy, that there
are

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are two Hymns or two Collects to the same Effect, and it is left to the Discretion of the Minister, whether of the two he will read. But I never heard it urged as inconsistent with Uniformity, that one of these was read in one of our Churches, whilst the other was reading in another. And yet the same Reason by which that is justified, will justify the Practice I am asserting, which is, that the Matter is left indifferent, and in either Case, the disjunctive Particle *Or* in the Rubrick gives a discretionary Latitude. *You may say or sing, you may read this Prayer or that.* III.

If there are any who object, that singing is too light and airy a Tone of Voice for humble Penitents confessing their Sins to God; what will they think of *David's* penitential Psalms? Do they imagine he was the less contrite, or that he felt the less Compunction of Soul for those Crimes which he bewailed, because his Confession was attended with another religious Act, the consecrating to God's Honour his musical Faculty, which others prostituted to more ungodly Purposes?

BUT

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SERM. BUT there are some, and those well-
 III. meaning People, who complain that in a
 Choir, they find themselves at a Loss, their
 Attention is interrupted, they cannot join
 in, and go along with the Service, as they
 can in a Parish-Church. Perhaps a little
 Custom, and a constant Eye to their Com-
 mon-Prayer-Book may in a great Measure
 remove this Inconvenience. But if there
 are any, who find their Devotion rather
 hindered than exalted by the Musick; there
 is an easy Remedy, since there is scarce any
 Choir, that has not a Parochial Church
 within a small Distance, where those, who
 are so disposed, may pay their Devotions
 in the Way they think most edifying and
 affecting.

BUT for the better preventing all just Ex-
 ceptions to our Worship, it is highly in-
 cumbent on all who bear any part in the
 Performance of this Service, to behave
 themselves with the utmost Reverence
 and Decency, let them consider that it is
 their Business not to entertain the Ear but
 to raise the Devotion of the Congregation,
 and to employ those Talents they are pos-
 sessed

essed of to the Honour of their great Creator. The Sense of this should have a constant Influence on their Conduct, not only in the Church, by a grave and serious Deportment, by reverent and becoming Postures, but even on their whole Conversation, as they are all in some Sense ecclesiastical Persons, whether in holy Orders, or not. Least of all should they suffer those Voices, with which they celebrate God's Praises, to be ever employed in Oaths and Curses, or in singing profane or filthy Songs.

I HAVE done with what can be said against the *Common Prayer*, and now it is high Time to say something for it, besides what I have offered in a defensive Way.

It is confessed, that the Compilers of it were Men of great Judgment and Piety, and who had Resolution enough to suffer Martyrdom for the Protestant Cause; which is a farther Argument of the Injustice of those who charge their Composure with Popery.

As to the Book itself, it is a sound Form of Worship, agreeable to the Form of sound Doctrine; every Thing prescribed

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SERM. bed in the Rubricks is lawful and allow-

III. able, fit and expedient, orderly and decent :

The Ceremonies are few, and those not burthensome nor improper, but chosen with great Deliberation, as may appear from the Preface or Declaration before the Book, relating to them.

THE Prayers are plain and unaffected; easy and perspicuous; expressed in grave and significant Language, in a clear and rational Method, extended to all our common Exigences, and fitted to all the Occasions that ought to be Matter of publick Prayer; where there is Nothing omitted that we have any Encouragement to petition for, nor any Thing desired of God, but what we are warranted to ask, and have just Reason to expect, if he knows it to be proper and expedient for us, and conducive to our eternal Happiness. Where we urge no Merits but those alone of our crucified Redeemer, not our own, not those of departed Saints or Angels. Where we pray to God alone, and seek not to approach him by any other Mediator but his beloved Son. Where we address ourselves to him in the most suitable Terms of
Reverence

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Reverence and Respect, of Humility and SERM.
Submission. Where we acknowledge all III:
his divine Attributes, confessing his un-
bounded Power, when we call him the
Almighty; his unerring Wisdom, when
we invoke him as the Fountain of it; his
Omniscience, when we tell him that no
Secrets are hid from him, and that he
knows our Necessities before we ask; his
Mercy, when we own him for the God
of it; and so for his other Properties.

AND as we invoke, adore and praise
him in Terms that express the highest
Awe and Reverence; so do we confess
our Sins to him with the deepest Sorrow
and Humiliation, we intercede, with an
universal Charity, for all Mankind, we
supplicate for future Mercies with a pious
and humble Deference to his Will, and ac-
knowledge past ones with a sensible and
hearty Gratitude.

It is indeed a System of Prayer so wise-
ly calculated for all the Purposes of Devo-
tion, that whatever Exceptions may have
been made to it, it could never give just
Cause for any; and in that Sense I call it
inoffensive, not that none were ever of-
fended

112 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERMON. fended at it, but because none ought

III. to have been offended. And we may
reasonably challenge the Impugners of it,
to produce any Liturgy, either ancient or
modern, against which as great if not
greater Objections might not be brought,
if Men would make it their Business to
find Faults.

I AM sorry I must contract my self
where there is Room to be so copious,
but there is the less Need of enlarging,
since the Excellence of this Service has
been so fully displayed in a celebrated Ser-
mon that is in every body's Hands.

LEAVING therefore such intrinsick
Proofs as might be drawn from the Exa-
mination of the Liturgy itself in its several
Parts, I shall only urge the Testimony of
indifferent Persons in its Favour.

THE learned *Grotius* confessed long
since, that it came nearer the primitive
Pattern, than that of his own, or any
other of the Reformed Churches.

THOSE of the Reformation abroad at
this Day have it in great Admiration. It
has been translated into more than one
Language, is already used in one Prote-
stant

Excellency of the English Liturgy. 113

stant Country, with some Alterations, (as SERM.
the different Nature of Governments makes III.
it necessary) and more have shown a
Disposition to receive it.

AND there is great Reason to hope that
on the next approaching *Advent Sunday*,
being the beginning of the Ecclesiastical
Year, it will be received in the Dominions
of a great Prince, who himself is zealous
in promoting the Design.

SURE I am it was not long since very
fairly advanced. But if it should not
immediately take Effect, the Disappoint-
ment will not be owing to their want of
Esteem and Veneration for our *Common*
Prayer, but to that Fear and Jealousy that
most Men naturally have of the Effects of
Innovations even for the better.

BUT if it should please God to prosper
this Design, and that this little (nay more
than a little) Leaven should in Process of
Time leaven the whole Lump of Prote-
stants abroad; we may charitably hope,
that our Brethren at home, who now dis-
like our Liturgy, when they find it so
highly valued by the Foreign Churches,

114 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. will not stay to be the last Protestants in
III. *Europe* that embrace it.

I HAVE but a Word or two more to add by way of Exhortation.

LET us then who are Members of that Church, where God is served in so commendable a Manner, and where we have so convenient a Help for our Devotion provided; Let us I say learn to know and value our own Happiness, and make a right Use of the Opportunities we enjoy.

FOR in vain is this Provision made for us, in vain do we boast of the Excellence of our Form, if we our selves do not conform to it: If we carelessly absent ourselves, or come to the Celebration of it without due Reverence and Attention, with wandering Minds and roving Thoughts, with cold lifeless Hearts, and unmoved Affections: If we listen only to the Sound, and are regardless of the Sense.

MAY the good God grant that all of us, when we offer him this Service, may duly consider the Weight and Importance of those Petitions we are making: That we may lift up our Souls, as well as Voices: And that by the united Fervour
of

of our Devotion, and Flagrancy of our SERM.
Zeal, we may effectually obtain, what we III.
faithfully ask, and draw down the several
Blessings we implore, on ourselves and all
for whom we intercede.

AND this for the Sake and through the
Merits of *Jesus Christ* our only Mediator.

*TO whom with the Father, and the
Holy Ghost, &c.*





S E R M O N IV.

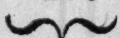
The Duty of Private Prayer.



Rom. xii. 12.

— *continuing instant in Prayer.*

SERM.
IV.



HAVE already from these Words discoursed to you of *the Duty of Prayer in general, and of Publick Prayer in particular.* I have shown you the Lawfulness and Expedience of worshipping God in publick Assemblies by a Set Form of Prayer, and the peculiar Excellence of the Form prescribed to us in the Liturgy of

The Duty of private Prayer.

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of our Church. I shall now consider this SERM.
Precept of the Apostle, where he requires IV.
us to continue instant in Prayer, as it re-
lates to private Devotion, and that Wor-
ship of God of which the Closet is the
proper Scene. For there can be no Doubt
but both of these are included in the Ex-
hortation before us, our Obligation to ei-
ther being equally strong and binding;
nor can our most punctual Observance of
one of them, atone for our Negligence,
or Pretermision of the other, where fit
Opportunities are not wanting for the Per-
formance of it.

FOR as they who neglect the assembling
themselves together, and repairing to the
Places of publick Worship, under Pretence
of serving God at Home, do not only vio-
late an expresse Command, but rob God of
that Honour that is due to him, by refu-
sing to acknowledge him in the great Con-
gregation, themselves of many spiritual
Advantages, and their fellow Christians of
their Communion with them, and the En-
couragement of their good Example: and
by so doing, give great Cause of Suspicion,
that they do not pray to God any where,

SERM. since they are so backward to offer their

IV. Prayers to him, where he has promised
to have a more immediate Regard to them : and that the Light which they hide under a Bushel, is totally extinguished ;

As these, I say, are the ill Consequences of declining the publick Service ; so on the other Hand, they who only join in the Prayers of the Church, and never call upon God in Secret, 'tis greatly to be feared come thither only to be seen of Men ; and if so, they have their Reward already.

'Tis plain such Men have but little Regard to our Saviour's Injunction, when he bids us enter into our Closets, and pray there with the Doors shut, *i. e.* to be as retired in our private Devotions as we can, to pay our Adoration to Almighty God, with a sincere Desire to please him, and only him, without the least Mixture of Ostentation, or Concern for human Praise.

He that can stoop to so poor an Aim, when he is required to act from so much nobler a Principle, must surely persuade himself

The Duty of private Prayer.

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himself, either that God cannot see in Secret, or that he wants the Power or the Will to reward openly ; or he must think the Applause of mistaken Men a more desirable Reward, than any God is able to bestow. SERM.
IV.

We find by the History of our blessed Saviour, that he did not only worship in the Temple and the Synagogues, and with his Disciples alone, or a select Number of them ; (which was a Sort of Family-Prayer, and ought to be a powerful Motive to that Duty) but moreover that he withdrew himself from Company at certain Seasons in Order to a Solitary Devotion, free from any Interruption or Disturbance, and without any other Witness than his Heavenly Father, who in his Closet-Retirements was always present, and he himself declares, that he was never so far alone, *but that the Father was with him.* John 16. 32.

Thus has he thought fit to encourage our Obedience to his Precept, when he enjoyns us to enter into our Closets, by his own most glorious Example ; submitting in this, as in other Cases, to the Use of such Remedies as he himself did

SERM. not need, that we who do, might not
 IV. scruple to have Recourse to the same Remedies.

FOR this Reason he suffered himself to be baptized in *Jordan*, by which Baptism in others is signified the Mystical Washing away of Sin, though himself was entirely clean and pure from all Sin whatever, that no one ever after, who professed himself to be his Disciple, should decline that holy Institution which he had thus sanctified by his own Use: That they who were conceived and born in Sin, should joyfully receive this figurative Purgation, which their immaculate Lord himself did not disdain, that thus he might fulfill all Righteousness.

So far then as concerned himself, he might have dispensed with that Ceremony; nor did he come out of the River after his Baptismal Ablution a Whit cleaner than he went in.

AND as well might he have dispensed with those devotional Recesses and Retirements, as having none of those Occasions that make them necessary for us.

WE

The Duty of private Prayer.

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WE indeed have a strict Account to SERM.
make of our Actions, a black Catalogue IV.
of Sins to enumerate and bewail, a wicked
and deceitful Heart to examine and ex-
plore through many intricate Windings
and fallacious Doublings : not only an ha-
bitual Depravity and Proneness to Evil, but
a numerous Train of actual Miscarriages, all
which, as far as we are able to recollect
them, we are obliged to make a particular
Confession of; earnestly to implore the
Pardon of our offended God, for every
single Breach of his Commands, which af-
ter the most careful and severe Disquisition,
we are conscious to ourselves that we
have been guilty of, besides that general
Petition of the holy Psalmist, that *he would
cleanse us from our secret Faults.*

BUT how can all this be duly performed
in the midst of Noise and Hurry, of Tu-
mult and Distraction, where the wanton
Levities, or busy Cares of the World will
be ever and anon breaking in upon us,
and interrupting the Chain of our Me-
ditations ?

THE Service of the Church itself is not
sufficient to answer all the devout Pur-
poses

SERM. poses before-mentioned, which they who

IV. frequent with the greatest Reverence and
 Attention, may still be ignorant of their spiritual State, if they do not examine themselves with a greater Nicety and Exactness than is possible to be done in the publick Assembly. And it is but a small Proportion of a Man's Sins, that will occur to his Mind, while the general Confession is reading.

THE Knowledge of ourselves is not so light and easy a Thing, as to be suddenly and hastily acquired. There is a Spring and Fountain of latent Malignity that lies deep buried within us, which is not to be discovered without great heed and considerate Reflection.

The Prophet tells us, *that the Heart is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked*, and then subjoins a Question, that well nigh imports an absolute Negation, *who can know it?*

No one indeed can know it thoroughly, who contents himself with a cursory and superficial Review of his past Actions and present Purposes, and does not sift himself to the Bottom.

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A MAN has need of great Diligence and a close Application, that would find out all his past Errors, and trace them back through the several Degrees and Stages by which they have insensibly gained upon him, to their first Original: When the first Breach was made in his Innocence, and what was the ensnaring Bait that drew him in: Seriously to weigh and ponder the Guilt and Heinousness of them, and the several Aggravations by which they have been heightened.

SERM.
IV.
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AND when after the most strict and impartial Scrutiny, he has discovered the Naughtiness of his own Heart, and is sensibly convinced both how bad he is, and how he came to be so; yet will this Knowledge or Discovery be of no Avail to him, unless he proceeds to form a steady and settled Resolution of abstaining from those Actions for the Time to come, of avoiding the Snares, and keeping out of the Way of such Temptations and Allurements, by which he was before inveigled.

Now this is not to be done with Rashness and Precipitancy, in a sudden Heat,
and

SERM. and transient Gust of Passion : But a Man

IV. must think considerately, and resolve soberly, he must arm himself with prudent Caution as well as with a firm and well-grounded Courage, and prepare for the Opposition he must expect to meet with in the violent Struggle between Duty and Inclination.

AND to this End Retirement and Privacy must greatly contribute ; nay, without it it is scarce possible to know any thing certain as to the State of our Souls, or to take up any wise and holding Resolution for the Recovery of them from the Dominion of Sin and *Satan*.

LET a Man's Mind be never so religiously employ'd, yet so long as he lies open to all the Avocations that may offer themselves, and will suffer himself to be called off in the midst of his Devotions, he will find Cause to regret not only the Loss of so much Time as was spent in that Interval, but that after he is returned to his Prayers or Meditations, something he saw or heard during the Interruption will stick upon his Mind, and take up room in his Thoughts, so that he cannot
without

without some Pains and Difficulty recover SERM.
the same Frame and Disposition of Soul, IV,
to which he had wrought himself up be-
fore he was disturbed.

NOR indeed can any Thing be more grievous and unwelcome to a devout and truly pious Soul, than, when it is most agreeably occupied, and entertaining itself with the noblest Objects, to be drawn off from the Contemplation of God and his Attributes of Heaven and Heavenly Things, on some mean and frivolous Occasion, and such every Occasion may be accounted, that relates only to worldly Affairs, in Comparison of those sublime and lofty Subjects in which it was wrapt up before.

BUT when a Man is wholly secluded from all Company, and perfectly at Leisure for such devotional Exercises, what Pleasure can be equal to that of so conversing with his Almighty Creator, disburthening his Soul before him, and casting all his Care upon him that careth for him? What Words can sufficiently express the ravishing Transports of Joy, which that Soul must experience, that in its Flights of Devotion

SERM. votion can, as it were, put off the Flesh,

IV.  divest itself of all Care or Concern for wordly and terrestrial Objects, and have its Conversation in Heaven?

WHAT a true spiritual Comfort and Consolation does it feel in every Part of that Holy Exercise? With what a pleasing Ecstasy of Love and Gratitude does it praise God for his Mercies? With what a full Assurance of Hope does it implore his farther Benefits and deprecate his Judgments? Nay, even from the deepest Sorrow and Contrition for those Sins by which it has provoked him, what a Redundancy of Joy arises? For, as widely opposite as they seem, Joy itself, the most solid and sprightly Joy, is the Result of that Godly Sorrow that worketh Repentance not to be repented of. There is no Heart so enlarged with Delight and Satisfaction, as that which has been straitned and distressed with the Sense of its own Guilt; the broken and contrite Spirit is afterwards the most raised and exalted, and a Man is never so truly glad, as when he is glad that he has been made sorry after a godly Sort.

WHILST

WHILST the holy Recluse is thus, at SERM.
proper and convenient Seasons, withdrawn IV.
from the World, and at Leisure to pursue
his heavenly Meditations, to perform the
several Acts of secret Piety, and enjoy an
undisturbed Communication with God; he
opens all his Wants, discovers all his hid-
den Frailties, and pours out his Soul to
him with a hearty and sincere Confidence,
and without Extenuation or Reserve; He
knows 'tis in vain to cover or conceal any
Crime from him, to whom it is already
known, before it is confessed, nay even be-
fore it was committed.

If he uses any Help to his Devotion (as
there are very good and useful ones provi-
ded) he does not think it enough to rest
in a bare Repetition of the Words, but en-
deavours heartily to affect himself with
the Sense and Meaning of them.

AND when he finds the Prayers too ge-
neral, and not sufficiently adapted to his
particular Case, but that he is directed
therein to make a special Mention of the
Sins he has committed, the Duties he has
neglected, the Mercies he has received, his
own temporal or spiritual Wants, or the
Persons

SERM. Persons he is more immediately bound to

IV. pray for ; his own affectionate Sense and godly Discretion is ready to supply what could not be provided for in any written Form, inasmuch as the Case of each individual Christian is, in these Respects, different from that of all others.

BUT then he has this Advantage, that if proper and suitable Expressions do not readily occur to him, whereby he may supply what remains to be accommodated to his particular Occasions, he has Leisure to study for them, and need not, through a causeless and inconsiderate Haste, utter his Mind in indecent or improper Terms. God judgeth not as Man judgeth, nor does he at all regard how fast or fluently we pray, but how fervently and cordially : Infomuch that if no Words at all should follow our Conceptions ; yet our Devotion will not be the less accepted, provided our Heart be touched with an inward Sense and Feeling.

WE must not expect to be the better heard for our much, or our fine speaking, nor can we imagine that God will be taken with Rhetorical Tropes and Figures. He

is

is a Spirit, and 'tis with our Spirit he has SERM.
IV.
Communion; while that is pure and unpolluted, he beholds some Rays of his own Perfection there, and is drawn to it by a kind of mystical Attraction. But empty Words and Sound can make no more Impression on his spiritual Nature, than Stripes or Blows.

So long then as the internal Meaning of those Prayers, which only concern God and ourselves, is sound and uncorrupt, we may be assured that he little regards the Elegancy of Stile or Politeness of Expression, provided we say nothing irreverent or unmannerly.

AND the like may be said as to our Gesture of Body. For though we cannot fall too low, nor humble ourselves too much before him; yet in vain are all Prostrations of Body, if our Heart is not humbled as well as that. But when all Pride and Haughtiness are once effectually quelled, the devout Suppliant may make his private Address to God in such bodily Postures as the Sense of his own Vileness and God's infinite Greatness will naturally extort from him, which sometimes perhaps will be

SERM. such as he should be forced to check in a
 IV. publick Congregation, lest they should carry some Appearance of Vanity and Affectation.

BUT however we determine ourselves as to these Circumstantials, this is most infallibly certain, that if we have any true Sense of Religion, any Love or Fear, or Trust in God, we must offer at least our Morning and Evening Sacrifice to him, and pay our Adoration to him, as well in our most secret Recess, as openly and in the Face of the World.

FOR otherwise, while we are careful to have it thought by the World that we are Worshippers of God; we do in Effect tell him to his Face, we either believe there is no such Being, or that he has no Power over us, and that we owe him no Homage or Allegiance.

THIS Neglect of private Prayer is indeed a Sort of renouncing his Providence, disowning our Relation to him, and putting ourselves out of his Protection. 'Tis abandoning our best and surest Remedy in all the Accidents and Misfortunes that may befall

beſal us. When all our worldly Comforts SERM.
fail us, when Poverty or Diſgrace, Pain IV.
and Sickneſs overtake us, or any other of 
the Evils and Calamities that attend our
Paſſage through this Life, and of which
every one; tho' never ſo proſperous, is ſure
to have ſome Share; where can we ſeek
for Refuge ſo ſecurely as from God? while
we have that Retreat, we cannot want a
firm Support under the greateſt Preſſures.
*If we cry unto God in our Trouble, he will
deliver us from our Diſtreſs.*

BUT where will that wretched Creature
betake himſelf in the Day of his Anxiety,
who has not kept one Spark of Devotion
alive within his Breſt, who has no Truſt
or Confidence in God, who will not, dares
not, cannot tell how to pray, who flies
from that which is his greateſt Privilege,
and thinks it a Penance to converſe with his
Maker?

HAVING ſaid thus much of the Na-
ture, Obligation, and Advantage of Prayer,
I ſhall enlarge a little on the ſeveral Parts
of which it conſiſts, and ſhew you how
both the publick and private Service of the
Church, and in Conformity to that Model,

SERM. the several Books of private Devotion,

IV. with which (blessed be God) this Nation
 is plentifully stored, do at once both exemplify and explain the Apostle's Rule, where he exhorts that Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men.

The two first of which Particulars, *viz.* Supplications and Prayers, though they seem to be of the same Import, are thus distinguished from each other, that the former of them is a Petition for Pardon, the latter for Help : the one being grounded on our previous Confession of Guilt, the other on our Acknowledgment of Want and Poverty.

According therefore to this Exhortation, we first must make our humble Confession to Almighty God, bewailing our manifold Impurities and Corruptions, our original Stain and natural Propensity to Evil, with the daily and hourly Accession of actual Enormities : beseeching him for his own infinite Mercy, and thro' the Merits of his beloved Son, to blot out the Remembrance of them, to restore us to his Grace and Favour, and
 set

The Duty of private Prayer.

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set us free both from the Guilt and Domi-
nion of them.

SERM,
IV.

IN Confidence of his Pardon thus obtained, we next proceed to call for Help. We lay before him our Wants and Necessities, our naked and destitute Condition, how unable we are to subsist of ourselves, if not daily relieved by his bountiful Providence: we beseech him to continue his Fatherly Indulgence to us, and still to afford us such Things as are necessary both for our Souls and Bodies: to avert from us whatever would be hurtful to, or destructive of either; to endue us with all Grace and Virtue, and guide us with his holy Spirit, and to bring us at last to his Heavenly Kingdom, and crown us with everlasting Glory.

And to manifest as well the just Sense we have of his Sufficiency, and that we do not think his granting the Requests of one, will so impoverish him as not to leave him wherewith to relieve another, as it often happens to us mortals, and particularly in the Case of *Isaac*, who when one Blessing was gone out from him, had not a second to bestow, at least not equal to the

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first;

SERM. first: That, I say, we may shew as well
 IV. the Opinion we have of his All-suffici-
 ency, as also our Christian Love and
 Charity; we pray not only for ourselves,
 but others.

WE intercede in a more especial Man-
 ner for those to whom we are any way
 related or allied by Birth or Affinity, by
 Service or Dependance, by Subjection or
 Subordination; and more largely for all
 who belong to the same civil Community
 with ourselves, for all that profess our
 common Christianity, nay for all that
 partake of the same common Nature
 with us.

BUT are we not expressly told in Scrip-
 ture, that *Jesus Christ is the only Mediator*
between God and Man? With what Con-
 fidence then can one Man presume to be-
 come a Mediator for another?

TO which I answer: That our Prayers
 to God for one another are so far from
 interfering with Christ's Mediation, that
 they acknowledge and recognize it. We
 offer up those very Intercessions in his
 Name, and confess him to be our only
 Mediator and Advocate. We presume
 not

not to mediate by Virtue of our own Merits, but for the Sake of our blessed Redeemer, and in Subordination to him. We modestly Petition for that which he can with Authority require, since he has paid the Price of their Redemption. We can only beg of our heavenly Lord, that he would frankly forgive the Debt which neither they nor we have wherewithal to satisfy, and that in Supply of our Disability, he would accept the Satisfaction made by his beloved Son.

SERM.
IV.

HOWEVER, that the fervent Prayer of a righteous Man is oftentimes effectual for others as well as for himself, and that, not for single Persons only, but also for whole Kingdoms, we have both the Testimony of St. *James*, and divers Instances likewise in Holy Scripture. We read that God would have condescended so far at the earnest Request of *Abraham*, as to have spared *Sodom*, and forbore the Execution of his intended Judgment, if he could have found in that large and populous City but ten righteous Persons to expiate for the Guilt of such a Multitude of bad ones. Thus when he was ready to have destroyed the disobedient *Israelites*, his Servant

SERM. *Moses* stood before him in the Gap, and

IV. stayed his Fury. And at another Time
 when he had sent a Pestilence among
 them; then stood up *Phineas*, and prayed
 [or executed Judgment] and so the Plague
 ceased. Thus when *Job* interceded for his
 Friends, God was contented to hear him
 speak for them, tho' he would not permit
 them to plead for themselves.

BUT in these and all other Cases, where
 the Prayers of a good Man are prevalent
 enough to obtain a Pardon for a bad one,
 we never find that he pretends to any
 Right, or insists on his own Worthiness,
 but leaves it entirely to the free Bounty
 and Beneficence of God.

You see with what Modesty and Sub-
 mission *Abraham* makes his Address; how
 many Excuses he makes for presuming to
 speak to God, when he was but Dust and
 Ashes.

BUT that wherein the Difference be-
 tween our Saviour's Intercession and that
 of all others does chiefly consist, is this,
 that the most powerful of human Medi-
 ators, though they may possibly contribute
 in some Measure to the averting the Pu-
 nishment,

nishment, yet can never take away the SERM.
Guilt; they may prevail with God to have IV.
some Patience with his Debtor, for whom
they sue, but can never cancel the Obligation.

So that although, when we make our Petitions for one another with pious Minds and cordial Dispositions, we may all in some Sort be said to be Mediators; yet in the highest and most excellent Sense of the Word, as it imports one who has some Right and Authority so to interpose, it is a most undoubted Truth which is affirmed by *St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 5. That there is but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.*

IN the mean Time sure it is, we are in more than one Place of Scripture required to interpose our charitable Requests in behalf of our Christian Brethren: We are told they shall be of some Significancy if they are fervent; and we read of Cases where they have been so, and consequently we both may and ought, as we are directed, to let one Part of our Prayers consist of Intercession for others.

THE

SERM. THE last Branch of Prayer mentioned

IV. by the Apostle in the Text above-named, is giving of Thanks. This we cannot but own to be a very just and reasonable Debt, where we have received so much, even all that we have, and where we owe our Dependance for all that is yet to come. What less Return can we make, than the thanking our Benefactor, owning him as such? We stand indebted to the divine Bounty for the Nourishment that sustains us, the Rayment that clothes us, and the very Air we breath. Whatever spiritual or temporal Blessings we enjoy, he is the sole Giver and Disposer of them. And these he is at all Times ready to shower down upon us in great Abundance; nor can any Thing but our Ingratitude for past Mercies, defeat us of a new Succession of them, and make him divert the Stream of his Blessings into some other Channel.

WHATEVER Good befalls us, we must ever be careful to ascribe it to the supreme Fountain of all Good. We must be thankful both for general and particular Mercies; not only for those vouchsafed immediately to ourselves, but for those we enjoy in Common

mon with the rest of Mankind. We must SERM.
bless and praise him for his Creation of the IV.
World, his gracious and wise Administration of the Course of it, and for the great Variety of Comforts it abounds with: but especially for the greatest of them all, the raising us above it, and giving us a Prospect of a more glorious and happy State to come, which is purchased for us by the Death of his ever-blessed Son, and revealed to us in his Holy Word.

THE Blessing of our Redemption is of so inestimable a Price, that if we have any Gratitude, our Hearts will be always full and overflowing with the Sense of it, and we shall never cease devoutly to commemorate it.

AND here I cannot but observe to you, that the original Word for giving of Thanks in that Passage of *St. Paul*, where the several Parts of Prayer are enumerated, is *εὐχαριστία*, from whence is derived our *English* Word *Eucharist*, by which we understand that grateful Sacrifice of Praise and Thanks which we offer to Almighty God, in Remembrance of the Death and Passion of his Son, when we duly partake
of

SERM. of the Holy Communion of his Body and

IV. Blood. Though every thing we receive at

his Hands ought to be Matter of Thankfulness, and deserves our most sincere and hearty Acknowledgments, yet his so loving the World as to give his only begotten Son to suffer Death upon the Cross for our Redemption, is a Blessing so transcendently great, as should enflame us with the highest Degree of Love, and which requires the most exalted Strains of Gratitude.

Now the properest Way of expressing our most grateful Resentment of the Benefits of that his precious Blood-shedding, is in that Method which he himself has commanded and prescribed us ; Symbolically to represent that Oblation of him, which he himself made really and truly, to do that mystically in Remembrance of him, which he has strictly done, and in a literal Sense in Remembrance of us. When we perform this Holy Mystery with a due Preparation of Heart, and truly religious Frame of Spirit ; when we are sensibly affected with the exceeding Greatness of his Love, and solemnly resolve to make him the utmost Returns of Duty and Obedience

ence which our finite and imperfect Na- SERM.
ture can possibly attain to; this is in the IV.
truest Sense *εὐχαριστεῖν*, to give Thanks,
which is the best and most acceptable Part
of Prayer.

NAY, the very Institution and Com-
mand of our blessed Saviour, and his re-
quiring us thus to shew forth his Death,
is a Matter of fresh Obligation to us. For
whilst we are thus offering our Tribute of
Praise to him, we find all the real ad-
vantage returns upon ourselves.

AND as it is the usual Consequence of
a just and unfeigned Gratitude, that it
draws down on the grateful Person some
new additional Mercies; so fares it with
the devout and worthy Communicant:
He feels such an Improvement in all his
Graces, his Faith so enlivened, his Hope
so confirmed, his Charity so enflamed,
and, in a Word, his whole inward Man
so much bettered and amended, that after
he has been paying his Thanks to God, in
and by the Holy Sacrament, he perceives
he has fresh Occasion to thank him for
it.

AND

SERM. AND thus have I represented to you the

IV. several Parts of which our Prayers must
ordinarily consist; I mean those set and
stated Devotions which we have Leisure
and Opportunity to perform at large, either
in the Church or Closet, not excluding
such short and concise Ejaculations in any
one of those Kinds, as sudden and emer-
gent Occasions may require of us, when
we have not Room or Convenience to go
through them all.

UPON the whole Matter, if we expect
any Blessing upon our Endeavours, or
that our Undertakings should thrive and
prosper, we first must dedicate both our-
selves and them to God, earnestly im-
ploring his divine Patronage and Direc-
tion, without which, all our own Care,
and Industry, and Watchfulness, is in
vain.

WE may think highly of our own
Power and Ability, and be big with ima-
ginary Aims and Projects; but if God
does not approve and second them, we
may be assured that they will either not
succeed, or that our very Success will
ruin us.

AND

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AND it is no less sure, that he will never be induced to favour our Designs, if we do not think his Assistance worth the asking. SERM.
IV.

BUT here it may be, and has been by some objected : Are we not taught that the Divine Providence is continually watching for our Good ? Does not the Almighty know all our Necessities before we ask, nay, before we know them ourselves, and more than we know or think we need ? And is not his fatherly Indulgence always ready to relieve those Necessities under which he sees us labour ? And if so, what Need is there of Praying ? Why should we trouble God with importunate Sollicitations, for that which he is of his own Accord inclined to give us ?

BUT in Answer to such profane and ungodly Reasoners, we have God's own positive Command to alledge ; that very God who is so able and willing to assist us, who knows our Wants better than we do ourselves, has himself required us to ask, that we may receive. He is always extending his Mercies toward us, and has an infinite Store of them ready provided for

SERM. for us, but he has appointed Prayer as the

IV. instrumental Cause of drawing them down upon us.

IT is true, he might, if he had thought fit, have granted us what we stand in Need of, without our suing or petitioning for it: And so he might, if he had pleased, have resolved to save us absolutely and unconditionally, without any Regard either to the Soundness of our Faith, or Sincerity of our Obedience: He might have made a Heaven of this Earth, and Angels of us Men: But this is arguing for God's Power, in Opposition to his Will, and contradicting the settled Course of his Providence, which has appointed such Conditions as the Means of obtaining such Advantages. And what Condition can be more practicable and easy, than only to ask and have our Wish effected?

OUR Prayers therefore do not become superfluous from God's Willingness to grant, forasmuch as he is only willing to grant to them who are as willing to pray.

To act otherwise, would be to cross the great End for which he made us, *viz.* The Advancement of his own Glory.

For

For what Glory do they ascribe to him, SERM.
who never adore him as their Creator, nor IV.
invoke him as their Benefactor, nor intreat
him as their Judge?

BESIDES, there is a great Mistake in the Objection, when it supposes that God would be troubled or teased with the Importunity of our Solicitations. This is a poor *Epicurean* Notion, which highly derogates from his infinite Perfection, and represents him as capable of intending but a few Objects at a Time: Whereas he surveys the whole Universe at one single View, and all the minutest Parts of which it is composed, with as much Ease as if it were one uniform Object.

WE may pray then without incommoding God, we must pray if we would please him, or if we expect any Benefit and Assistance from him. And there are none who stand more in Need of our Prayers, than they who persuade themselves they need neither their own, nor ours.

OTHERS there are, who are better convinced of the Usefulness of Prayer, and will own it to be sometimes necessary, but not always, though the Exhortation in

SERM. my Text requires us to *continue instant in*

IV. *Prayer*, and other Places there are to the same Purpose.

BUT they cry, they have not always the same Occasion for Succour, and why should they call for it, when they do not want it? 'Tis true, when they are in a helpless and dejected Estate, oppress'd with Misery, and laden with Misfortunes, they know whither to betake themselves: That it is proper at such a Juncture to fly to Heaven for Relief, when they despair of any human Remedy. But while Matters go smoothly and easily with them, and they have all that their Heart can wish, what can they desire more, or to what Purpose should they pray? And they think St. *James* himself gives some Countenance to this Distinction, when he prescribes, *that if any one is afflicted he should pray; but if any one is merry, he should sing.*

BUT is there then no Part of Prayer that is fit for a prosperous and flourishing Condition? Do we forget to whose Bounty and Indulgence we owe our Happiness and Ease? And is there no Return of Thanks due to him? Are we sure we are so far
Masters

Masters of what we enjoy, that nothing SERM.
can dispossess us of it? And have we no IV.
Reason to pray for the Continuance of our
Prosperity? Have we no spiritual Wants
to be supplied, or do we look upon our
Souls, as not worth our Care? If our
Health and Plenty makes us unmindful of
God, and regardless of his Providence;
may not such Ingratitude very justly pro-
voke him to visit us with the contrary
Afflictions, and starve us into a better
Mind?

As to St. *James's* Advice, 'tis true he
directs those that are merry, *i. e.* who have
no Calamity either spiritual or temporal to
disquiet them, who are at Ease in their
Bodies, their Estates and their Consci-
ences, to sing. But what would he have
them sing? Why, Psalms and Spiritual
Songs.

ALL then that can be inferred from
this Passage is, that the afflicted and the
happy Person, as they are not upon the
same Terms, are not to pray exactly to
the same Effect. The one must be larger
in his Supplications and Petitions, the other

SERM. in his Praises and Thanksgivings : But still
 IV. they must both pray.

I SHALL now conclude all with a brief Exhortation, *viz.* that we would not only let our Prayers be hearty and sincere, ardent and affectionate, and such as proceed from a pure Heart ; but that whatever we ask, we would do it with Faith, nothing doubting but that in due Time we shall be answered, and obtain our Requests in Value at least, if not in Kind.

LET us not be discouraged, nor grow impatient, or think ourselves neglected, or our Prayers insignificant, if all we crave is not immediately granted. Let us have but a little longer Patience, and that that shall come, will come. Whatever we ask must still be with an humble Deference and Submission to his Divine Will, who best can judge what is proper and convenient for us, and who when we beg of him such Things as would be hurtful and pernicious, does most indulgently deny them to us, and it is our Privilege to be without them.

Let any one but reflect on his past Life, and consider how many Things in the
 Course

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Course of it, which he passionately longed for, would have proved his Ruin if he had obtained them, and how many others which he was most averse to, have turned to his greatest Advantage, and he will be convinced of the Shortness of his own Sight, and the Reasonableness of trusting all to God.

SERM.
IV.

HOWEVER, let us not cease continually to importune him, let us not be weary, or faint in our Supplications, but constantly urge both his own gracious Promises, and the Merits of his beloved Son; and we may rest firmly assured, that our Prayers will ascend for a Memorial unto him, that he will faithfully perform those Promises, and in his own due Time and Manner effectually answer whatever Requests we offer in the Name, and for the Sake of our crucified Redeemer.

*TO whom with the Father, and the
Holy Ghost, &c.*

L 3

SERMON



SERMON V.

The Safety and Stability of Christian Principles.



COL. ii. 6, 7.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving.

SERM.
V.



WHEN St. Paul perceived the Colossians, whom he had lately converted to the Christian Faith by the faithful Ministry of Epaphras, to be in Danger of relapsing from

from that Faith again, through the Infi-
rnuations of some crafty and ill-designing
Men, who made it their Business to un-
settle them in their Principles, and to pull
down again what the Apostle had built
up; he sets himself in this Epistle, and
particularly in this Part of it, to warn
them of the Snares that were laid for
them, and the dangerous Consequence of
deserting that Jesus, to whom they had
devoted themselves, or suffering themselves
to be drawn off from their Allegiance, by
worldly Philosophy, or forged Traditions,
or any other Artifice whereby those cunning
Seducers lay in wait to deceive them.
That him whom they had solemnly ac-
knowledgeed for their Lord, they should
constantly adhere to, and be obedient to
his Law in all Things. That it was by
no Means for their Safety or Interest, to
let their Faith be light and fluctuating,
and swimming on the Surface, but that it
ought to sink down into their Hearts,
and there take a deep and lasting Root.

That they should never warp from the
Foundation they were built upon, but
stand firm on their Basis, encreasing daily

SERM. in Heighth, without expatiating wider, or
 V. growing more narrow and contracted, so
 as not to be shaken or drove from it by
 the Violence of any Storms.

THAT they should not content themselves with slightly tasting that salutary Doctrine, and so stop short where they were first entered, but make a constant Progress therein, and pursue it with all their Vigour, till they largely abounded with spiritual Knowledge, returning all due Thanks to that God who had called them from that State of Perdition in which they before lay, to be the Children of Grace and Heirs of Glory.

THIS, or to this Purpose, the Apostle seems to drive at, by his Allusions to a Root and a Building, and other Expressions as well proper as metaphorical.

A NOBLE and highly necessary Exhortation, and very fit to be applied to the Men of the Age we now live in, since even at this Day there are not wanting too many, who though they have received Christ Jesus for their Lord, and have been solemnly initiated in his Mysteries, yet are very far from walking in him: So far
 from

from being rooted and built up in him, SERM.
V.
that they are ready to be carried away by every the lightest Breath of Philosophy and vain Doctrine, and not only turn Deserters themselves, but make it their Business to pervert others.

AGAINST which foul and dangerous Apostasie, I shall now, by God's Assistance, offer a Preservative; and though I am persuaded I am not now speaking to any of that unhappy Number, who reject the first Principles of Religion, but on the contrary, to a great many, who are not only thoroughly grounded, but have made large Improvements, and are far advanced both in Belief and Practice; yet since no one can be too well and securely fortified against the deceitful Arguments he may meet with in the Course of his Conversation, and since it is an Injunction laid on every Christian, that he be ready to give an Answer to every Man, that asketh him a Reason of the Hope that is in him; I shall not think my Time misemployed, if I endeavour to strengthen and confirm you in the first Articles of your Faith, on which all the others depend.

SERM. IT is no Disparagement to a high and
 V. well-built Structure, (to keep to our Apo-
 stle's Metaphor) if the Foundations of it
 be sometimes searched, to see if Nothing
 there be at a Fault, but that all stands fast
 and sure; for if that be unsound or weak,
 whatever is built upon it must stand very
 loose and tottering.

AND I think there can be no better Ex-
 pedient for strengthening the Foundation
 of our Belief (and Nothing sure can be
 more just and reasonable) than that every
 Man should firmly resolve never to heark-
 en to any one that goes about to persuade
 him out of his Christianity, who does not
 offer to put him in a better Way, and show
 him some other System that either makes
 fairer Promises, or of the Performance of
 whose Promises there is better Security, or
 that rests on a surer Bottom: When such
 a System indeed is proposed, (as I am sure
 it never yet has been) I will be far from
 hindering or opposing his Conversion to it.

THAT he would consider with himself,
 as every prudent Man does, in all the
 Transactions of Life, especially in those of
 the highest Concernment, whether his
 Gain

Gain or Loss is like to be the greater ; SERM.
left while he starts at some petty Difficul- V.

ties, and is angry that all the Myſteries of Faith are not juſt ſuited to the Standard of his Reaſon, he ſhould fly for Refuge to ſuch Principles as are neither conſiſtent with Reaſon, nor with one another, which pretend to ſettle Nothing, and yet unſettle every thing, which leave a Man in the greateſt Perplexity and Anguiſh, with Nothing to believe, Nothing to hope, Nobody to truſt, and no whither to turn himſelf.

THAT I may not affirm this without Proof, and that it may the more evidently appear how far thoſe Men are from having bettered their Condition, who have bid *Adieu* to the Goſpel, and taken up the Liberty of Free-thinking, as they call it, I ſhall endeavour to evince theſe three Propoſitions.

Fiſt, THAT no Man can be eaſy or happy, till he has, once for all, pitched on ſome Set of Principles, from which he is reſolved never to depart.

Secondly,

SERM. *Secondly*, THAT neither Atheism nor

V. Deism has any fixed or certain Principles, nor is it possible for any Man to cleave to either of them with a constant uninterrupted Tenor. And,

Thirdly, THAT the Christian Religion, and only that, is founded on such Principles, to which it is both safe for a Man to assent, and possible for him to adhere.

First, THAT no Man can be easy, &c.

So long as a Man is at a Loss with himself, and in Doubt as to these great necessary Points ; Who gave him Life ; What is his End of Living ; To what Purpose he acts ; or, What he drives at, there is Nothing in the Creation so contemptible or so miserable as he. It is indeed a Piece of Wisdom to consider well, to examine and try every Thing before we give a rash Assent, and take up our holding Resolution : But to be always doubting and uncertain, and never to acquiesce in the very first Principles, is not only Impiety, but Madness. A Mind thus various

ous and perplexed about the Objects of SERM.
Faith, is certainly the most racking and V.
severe Tormentor in the World; when it
believes Nothing so surely, but that the
least Shadow of an Argument on the other
Side shall undo all again, and unravel all
its Purposes.

HAVING once swerved from the strait
Path of Truth, it bewilders itself in
the perplexed Labyrinths of Doubt and
Scepticism, runs on in a perpetual Round
of Errors, and is vainly disquieted in the
Search of that which it can never find.

IF a Man therefore will make a right
Use of his Reason, he must not only con-
sider what is just before him, but provide
for Futurity, and guard against the Evils
that may happen hereafter. He must learn
to separate Truth from Falshood, Honesty
from Baseness, and to judge not only whe-
ther a Thing be simply good, but between
the Degrees of Goodness: Of profitable
Things, which will be most gainful: Of
hurtful Things, which will be least preju-
dicial: And from all these duly weighed,
he must lay down and form to himself a
certain Rule of acting and believing, which
he

SERM. he must inviolably pursue and walk by,
 V. and suffer no Temptation to divert him
 from it.

WHEN he is once settled in such an even and undistracted Course, it is then he begins to live, all that he had done before being lost Labour, and no Way conducive to the main Purpose of his Life. Then does he enjoy a true Peace and Serenity of Mind, when without any farther Scruple or Hesitation, without Loss of Time in going out of his Way, to seek for a better or a nearer; he goes on directly to the Mark. He has something now in View, on which he can with Security depend: He knows what he aims at, he knows it to be worthy his Aim, he sees by what Means it must be compassed: And 'tis in vain after that for any one to pretend to draw him aside from such a rooted Persuasion.

How much happier is such a State, than to be perpetually wavering, to stand as it were on one Foot, and not know where to set the other: not only to be ignorant of the Way that should lead one Home, but to have no Home at all to be led to: To be governed

governed by blind Chance, and carried SERM.
backward and forward with every Tide: V.
to be always doing and undoing: To act at
Random we know not what, nor why,
without ever casting up the Account of
Life, or levelling our Designs at any cer-
tain Scope.

IN short, unless you are willing to waste
your whole Life before you have resolved
what Method of Life you will fix to, once
for all, take Reason and Experience for
your Guides, examine, deliberate, ponder
every Thing, Causes and Effects, Means
and Ends, what has been said or done, the
Nature and Operations both of the Soul
and Body, lay all these together, and com-
pare them with one another, and when you
have so done, chuse out the Way that you
will walk in; I do not say, such a one as
is clogged with no Difficulties, which 'tis
in vain for you to expect, but that which
has the fewest, and those the most easy to
be surmounted. And, to finish this Head
in one Word, either give yourself wholly
up to some Religion, or declare yourself
of none, and keep to it.

BUT

SERM. BUT that the latter of these cannot be;

V. I am now going to show in my

Second Head, which is this, That neither Atheism nor Deism has any fixed or certain Principles, nor is it possible for any Man to adhere with Constancy to the same irreligious Notions.

It must be confessed indeed that the Abettors of those Notions, so far as they are employed in opposing the Tenets of others, and invalidating their Belief, may for a while please and hug themselves, and fancy they are the only Persons of Sense and Discernment, while the rest of the World is blind and cannot see the Cheat.

THEY know very well that it is a much easier Thing to ask a Question, than to answer it, to tye a Knot than to unty it; that a Sword to give a Wound with, is much more portable and light of Carriage, than Armour to keep it off.

This encourages them to set up for Champions, where they think they can look big, and make a Figure upon the cheapest Terms, Objections being easy and obvious, such as every Fool can hit on,

as

as our Proverb says, whilst the Solutions, SERM:
V.
though very strong and solid; have oftentimes the Disadvantage of lying deep, and requiring a greater Application of Thought to comprehend them; than such loose and fluttering Reasoners are willing to bestow.

BUT the Weakness and Folly of that Cause will more fully appear, when we consider, that such Infidels as either disown Religion in general, or all revealed Religion, have no other Aim, but to demolish whatever has been built by others; to root out the most certain and acknowledged Truths; to dispossess Men of all Awe or Reverence for any Thing that is sacred; all Inclination to Good or Abhorrence of Evil, all the Knowledge of God and invisible Things, which either has been revealed to us by himself, or demonstrated by the Light of Nature; and confirmed by the unanimous Consent of Mankind, the Original of all which Notions they ascribe to Fear, and the Continuance of them to the Prejudice of Education.

BUT they themselves, in the mean Time, have nothing to offer in the Room

SERM. of them. They can show you no Support

V. for the Mind, after they have dug away
 the old Foundation that sustained it; and
 when they have stripped you naked, and
 divested you of all Principles, they can direct
 you to no other Shelter.

THEY have indeed sufficiently explained
 themselves, and told us what they would not
 have; but what it is they would have, 'tis
 very hard for others to guess, and more
 than they themselves can tell. For 'tis
 their constant Practice to lurk as long as
 they are able, among Negatives, from
 which Hiding-places, they care not to be
 dragged out into the Light, so as to be
 obliged to give an Account of their own
 Faith, if we may call it Faith; they care
 not to answer, in their Turn, to those
 weighty Objections with which their own
 Cause is pressed.

As for Example, if you ask them,
 whence came this beautiful Structure of
 the Universe, if no Body built it? What
 is it, even at this Day, that sustains and
 connects this pendulous Globe, and keeps
 it from bursting asunder with its Fulness,
 or sinking with its Weight? Whether the
 numberless

numberless Instances of Wisdom and Power, and Order and Regularity, which No-body can help observing in the Course of Things, are not a much fairer Proof of a divine Providence, than those few Irregularities which they think they can point to, in the Administration of it, can furnish them with against it ?

SERM.
V.


If, as they pretend, there is nothing else but Matter and Motion in the World, yet who was it that gave the first Motion to Matter, which of itself is heavy and sluggish, and like to have remained in one eternal Rest ? Or who is it now, that gives such Variety of Determinations to that Motion ?

By whose Impulse or Direction do those Creatures that are utterly destitute of all Sense or Reason of their own, so admirably conspire to bring about the wisest and noblest Ends ? Besides, since there are evidently different Degrees of Perfection in the Beings that compose the Universe, some of which are more excellent than others, and others again than they ; I would only ask how high this Gradation is to be carried, where will they stop at last, and what

SERM. will they allow to be the most absolute
 V. and perfect Species of all?

WE can see nothing in this visible World more perfect than ourselves; for we see no other Being endued with Thought and Understanding, which is the noblest Accomplishment we are yet acquainted with. And yet with all this comparative Excellency, how vastly short is Man of absolute Perfection? What various Infirmities and Defects is he subject to, and how plainly does he feel, though he cannot see, another Power far more superior to him, than he himself is to the Beasts of the Field, and who can as absolutely dispose of him, as he can of them?

IF I say one presses such sceptical Persons with Questions of this Nature, and obliges them to declare what it is they do believe in these Points, as well as what they do not, they have nothing at all to answer, unless perhaps, that they may not remain wholly speechless, they fly to some exploded Dreams of the old Philosophers, which are far from being satisfactory to themselves, and which they cannot agree about with one another, how lovingly

vingly soever they agree in crying down SERM.
all that other Men account sacred and V.
divine.

Now all the affirmative Creed they have ever yet been pleased to give us, either as to the Original of the World, or the Government of it, comes to one of these Points. Either that it never had a Beginning, and is governed by a fatal Necessity, or, that it both began, and has ever since been governed by meer Chance; or that the World itself is God: Unless you will take this for another Affirmation, which is a Compound of all the Negatives in the World, that a Man can have no sure Knowledge of any Thing.

First, I say, they pretend that the World has been, as it is, from all Eternity, and neither had a Beginning, nor can have an End, that it is preserved by a perpetual Rotation of Matter passing from one Form to another: That all Events are brought to pass by invincible Necessity and unalterable Fate or Destiny, which nothing can resist.

BUT can you imagine any Man in his Senses does in good earnest believe, that

SERM. this Earth we live on has been in the State

V. it is from all Eternity, which at this Day
 is not wholly peopled, nor altogether
 known, but daily admits of new Discoveries?

FOR not to speak of *America*, which is but lately known, and vast Regions elsewhere, which were once thought uninhabitable, through the excessive Heat or Cold of the Climate where they lay, but are now sufficiently peopled; how great a Part even of *Europe* itself, even where it is most temperate, which not many Ages ago was nothing but a vast Desert, I mean the greatest Part of *Germany*, does now abound with flourishing Towns and Cities?

BUT if Mankind had been as numerous some Thousands of Ages ago, as they are at this Time, how came they to suffer themselves to be confined to so narrow a Space, when they might have had so much more Room? Or if the Numbers of Men encrease, as daily Experience tells us they do encrease, it is certain that by this Time a Thousand Worlds would not contain the Race of Men, though we
 should

should allow the Encrease but of one SERM.
Man in a Year from Eternity down to V.
this Time. 

AND not only from the late Discovery of it, may we be assured that the World had a Beginning ; but also from the late Invention of Arts and Sciences, as well as of those that still remain a Secret, which give a Spur to our present Industry, and are like to be the Reward of future Ingenuity. Many of those we have lately invented, were too obvious to have lain hid so long, if Men had been searching for them from all Eternity, and too useful and necessary to have been lost again, or fallen into Disuse after they were once found out, unless we could suppose the whole Race of Men to be extinct at once, and the Secrets to have been buried with them. And even on that Supposal, whence should there arise a new Race of Men, after the Species had once failed, but by Creation ?

WE are informed by the most authentick History, we may judge by the Shortness of all other History, which gives us the Transactions but of a few Thousands of Years, by the Improvements that have

SERM. been, and are daily made, in the Administration of Government, the Advancement of Commerce, &c. that the World is but newly made, newly I mean, when we speak with Respect to Eternity.

BUT made it could not be, by any other than an infinitely wise and perfect Author, nor would that Author, renouncing his Title to his own Workmanship, abandon it to a blind Necessity. That the World is not so administered, that all Events come to pass by inevitable Fate, but that some Things do happen one way, which might have fallen out another; there is no Man whose Senses are not all stupified, but may be convinced, not only from the elective Faculty of his own Mind, but even by the Cast of a Dye, the Death of the smallest Insect, or the very Turning of a Balance.

SINCE therefore they must allow, that some Things are contingent, their next Refuge is to *Epicurus's* System, which supposes that all Things are so. Now all Things they tell you are disposed, not by a certain Fate, but by uncertain Chance.

BUT

BUT that a Parcel of senseless Atoms, SERM.
or little Particles of Matter, without any V.
Skill or Knowledge of their own, and
without the Direction of any intelligent
Being, should, by meer Hazard, jump into
such a wonderful Order, and still subsist
in their first Harmony, is so gross an Ab-
surdity, that I will not waste your Time
in confuting it at large.

I WILL only mention one Thing which
equally destroys the pretended Dominion
both of Fate and Chance, *i. e.* That nei-
ther of them is any real Substance, but
only a meer Name; and can we think the
World is under such Direction? Let them
point out to us, if they can, the Person of
either Fate or Chance, or describe, of
what Colour, Shape, or Stature either of
them is. Will those very Persons, who
are so hard to be persuaded that all Things
were made out of Nothing, be yet so cre-
dulous as to imagine, that those very
Things have a meer Nothing for their
Author, and a meer Nothing for their
Governor? Will they who laugh at others
for their Belief of invisible Powers, ascribe
all Power to such imaginary Chimeras?

WELL

SERM. WELL then, say they, since it must be
 V. so, we will confess a God. But what
 God will you confess? Why the World or
 Universe, the several Parts whereof we
 think to be Creatures, but take the whole
 together, the *τὸ πᾶν*, and then 'tis God
 or the Creator.

AND this indeed is the only Deity, which
 the Generality of those Men allow, who
 go by the Name of Deists, which is just
 as if they acknowledged none at all. For
 this is downright Atheism in Effect, by
 whatever Name they may think fit to di-
 stinguish themselves.

FOR according to this Hypothesis too,
 we are at a Loss for some Power superior
 to Man, and more intelligent than he,
 which we can no where find in all this
 visible Frame, as great and magnificent as
 it is. Here we find all the same Difficul-
 ties return upon us, which I before obser-
 ved to arise from the Supposal of the
 World's Eternity, and a Thousand new
 Absurdities and Contradictions besides.

FOR if the World be God, then every
 Thing in the World is a Part of God, every
 Blade of Grass, every Grain of Sand, would

at

at this Rate, be a Parcel of the Almighty. **SERM.**
Then God must have a Share in every **V.**
Thing that is done or suffered by Men, he
must Mistake, and Sin, and Die, nay he
must be Living and Dead at the same
Time, with Abundance more such hope-
ful Consequences. And yet 'tis by being
fond of such miserable and ill-grounded
Conceits as these, that some of our refined
Gentlemen think to give us Proofs of their
Wit and Understanding.

WILL any one then envy the Condition
of such unhappy Wanderers? Will any
one wish to rove like them, without any
Guide, or any Rule, or any settled Pur-
pose, and both to live and die with
no better Expectation than the Beasts that
perish?

LET any one judge how little Reason
they have to scoff at others for trusting to
uncertain Hope, when they themselves
have none at all. And which adds much
to the Unhappiness of their Case, though
they have cast away all Hope, they cannot
cast away their Fear.

SINCE then, as I have shewed in my
Two first Propositions, a Man cannot be
easy

SERM. easy or happy without keeping to some

V. fixed Belief, and acting according to it, and since 'tis impossible for any one to keep to the same irreligious Principles, without often shifting his Faith and new modelling his negative Creed; it will easily follow, as I am now to prove in the

Third Place, That the Christian Religion, and only that, is founded on such Principles, to which 'tis both safe for a Man to assent, and possible for him to adhere.

THAT such a Person as *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom we profess to be Christ our Lord, did live at the Time we say he did, that he went about *Judea*, accompanied by Twelve Disciples, and gave out that he was sent from God, to reveal his Will to Mankind; that, to gain Credit to his Doctrine, he did (in Show at least) perform many signal Miracles, foretold many future Events, and, which was the Chief of all, that he himself would rise from the Dead after he had been Three Days in the Grave; that he did openly suffer under *Pontius Pilate*, was crucified, dead and buried, and that on the Day on which he had

had told them he would rise, his Body SERM.
could not be found in the Sepulchre, tho' V.
guarded with unusual Diligence by his 
Enemies, so as to leave no Room for any
Fraud or Collusion; that he was seen alive
after this by many who very well knew
him before his Crucifixion; nor did they
only see, but talk with him and handle
him; that they publickly declared this, and
that with so great Earnestness, that they
died Martyrs to the Truth of what they
so attested; that these Things, I say, did so
happen, the most bitter Enemies of Chri-
stianity have readily confessed.

ALL that they pretend on the contrary
is, that the Miracles he seemed to do,
might all be counterfeit, and the Multi-
tude, as they often are, might be imposed
on. But if they had been so, it must be
granted that this could not have been done
without a Confederacy and Combination,
and that his Disciples, who were scarce
ever from him, must have been privy to the
Secret, and engaged in his Designs.

AND can any one persuade himself, that
those very Accomplices, if that had been
the Case, were so foolishly mad, that they
should

SERM. should all of them to a Man so obstinately

V.  persist, even in Prison, on the Rack, in the Fire, on the Cross, to declare that very Person to be a wonderful Prophet, the true Son of the most high God, nay, the most high God himself, invoking him as such with their latest Breath, whom at the same Time they knew to be a notorious Impostor ?

It may be possible for History to furnish us with an Instance or two, of some single Person that has stood out to the last Extremity in a very unaccountable Lye ; but out of many Witnesses to the same Cause, who were put to the Torture in such distant Times and Places, so that they could not confer with one another, that not one should be prevailed with to retract his Testimony ; if this does not amount to an unexceptionable Proof, I see no Rule for Belief among Men, nor how it is possible to prove any Thing.

I forbear now to urge the uncorrupted Purity of Life and Manners both in Christ and his Disciples, and how ill they were fitted

fitted to set up for Deceivers of the SERMON
World. V.

I say Nothing of the incredible Progress of our Religion through so many Obstructions, without any Assistance of human Wit, without any Force of Arms, without any Countenance from the Civil Power; all which were violently employed against it.

I pass by the wonderful Completion of the Prophecies, and other Arguments of great Weight, because I persuade my self, that whoever seriously considers that one Proof that is drawn from the Testimony of the Apostles, will need no other Conviction.

Now this Religion so well grounded, delivered by so divine an Author to such faithful and upright Ministers, and from them transmitted to us, is not only adorned with such Excellency of Doctrine, to which one may safely give his Assent, but is moreover guarded by such desirable Promises, and such tremendous Threats, that a Man confessing its heavenly Original, may heartily embrace it, and hold fast
to

SERM. to it without ever being shaken, or repenting that he is a Christian.

HERE only can the Mind of Man find a sweet Repose, after it has been tired with vain Searching, and puzzled with intricate and cloudy Doubts. Here he may have a sure Rule to trust to, so that he need not disagree with himself, and be carried about from one Opinion to another. Here that immortal Part of us, that perceives itself to be made for Eternity, and dreads Nothing so much as Annihilation, may have a firm Assurance that it shall not die. Here there is a Foundation for Love and Charity, and mutual Offices of Kindness among Men, and mutual Trust and Confidence too, all which Irreligion destroys; so that it is both one's Pleasure and Interest constantly to adhere to it, as many wise Men have done, and still do, to their present Satisfaction and everlasting Benefit, of whom I pray God increase the Number.

IT now remains that I add something by Way of Exhortation. Let me then very earnestly beseech all Men, that they would never be tempted by any Suggestions

stions whatsoever, to swerve from this most SERM.
just and perfect Rule, nor be led by a vain V.
Singularity, and an Affectation of seeming
wise above the common Rate, into such a
Way of thinking as can never make them
happy, nor indeed does it so much as pro-
mise them they shall be so, but fairly in-
vites them to what they will be sure to
find, *viz.* Misery and Despair.

THAT they would have Nothing to do
with such Men, but leave them to enjoy
their own Conceits and curious Discove-
ries by themselves, who are perversely
learned, and witty to their own Torment,
and to the great Hazard of their own and
their Neighbour's Salvation.

THAT they would look upon those as
their worst Enemies, who go about to rob
them of their best Ornament and most
comfortable Support of Life, and to leave
them without Faith or Conscience. Who
first throw Dirt upon Religion, and then
point at it for being dirty, and would per-
suade you that those Stains which they
have so injuriously cast on it, are inherent
in, and inseparable from it. They first

SERM. disturb the Fountain, and then complain,
V. it is not clear enough to drink at.



WHAT Refuge, what Support do the Abettors of such Principles recommend to the troubled and afflicted, which some Time or other must be every one's Case? What Equivalent to that Trust and Reliance on God, which is the Christian's sure Retreat? Why, in such Case, it is their Doctrine, (and too often their Practice) that when Life is grown uneasy, a Man may lawfully rid himself of it. To the Prevalence of such Notions we may ascribe many of the Self-Murthers for which our Country is become so infamous, as is openly avowed by the Perpetrators of a most complicated Tragedy, fresh in our Memories, who though but in low Life, had learned, it seems, to be as fashionable Deists as any of their Betters, and had so far improved upon the Scheme, as to bring themselves to a Persuasion, that not only their Lives, but that of an innocent Babe, was at their Disposal. Behold a Specimen of that boasted moral Honesty, which is to supply the Place of Revealed Religion!

LET

LET every one then take up for his own SERM.
Part such a Resolution as this. V.

“ AS I have received Christ Jesus for
“ my Lord, so will I walk in him, being
“ fully convinced, that I must either at-
“ tain to Happiness through him, or that
“ there is no Possibility for Man to be
“ happy, and that every Step I have ta-
“ ken from him is so far on my Way to
“ apparent Ruin.

“ THIS holy Religion is like a Light
“ shining in a dark Place, which while I
“ keep before me, I see how to walk, and
“ am in no Danger of Stumbling or of
“ Falling ; but if I turn my Back upon
“ it, there remains Nothing but a dismal
“ Gloominess.

“ THIS is like *Noah's Ark*, that will
“ bear me securely above all Floods ; but
“ if like the Dove, I will fly abroad, I may
“ find Room enough to flutter and beat
“ my Wings in, but, like that, I know I
“ shall be glad to come back to the Ark
“ again, being able to find no other Foot-
“ ing.

SERM.

V.

“ *Adieu* then to them who would de-
 coy me from this Hold by idle Jests and
 trivial Objections. My Faith is a Thing
 of too great Price to be thrown away
 in Sport.

“ L E T others take those Scoffers for
 wise and happy Men; for my Part,
 I am sure they must be stung, as
 often as they reflect on how unequal
 Terms they engage with the Advocates
 for Religion, when they lay their All at
 Stake, and must be for ever miserable
 if they lose their Cause, and yet can be
 no Gainers if they should win. For
 if there should be Nothing after this
 Life, yet a Christian would at least be
 in as good a Condition as they.

“ In Spite therefore of all their fly In-
 sinuations, in Spite of all the Stumbling-
 blocks they can throw in my Way, I
 will never cease to believe and act as it
 becomes a Christian.

THESE Resolutions, and such as these,
 take Care to fix well in your Minds, being
 rooted and built up in the Faith, abound-
 ing therein with Thanksgiving; and as
 the

the Reward of your Firmness and Perse- SERM.
verance, you will not fail to receive true V.
Peace of Mind in this Life, and everlast-
ing Joys in that which is to come.

*Which God of his infinite Mercy
grant, &c.*





S E R M O N VI.

The Direction of Practice, the true
End of Hearing.



JAM. i. 23, 24.

*For if any be a Hearer of the Word,
and not a Doer, he is like unto a
Man beholding his natural Face
in a Glass : For he beholdeth him-
self, and goeth his way, and
straitway forgetteth what man-
ner of Man he was.*

SERM.
VI.



OUR Apostle, among many o-
ther useful Directions, advises us
in the 19th Verse of this Chap-
ter, that we *be swift to hear ;*
and again, to the same Purpose, Verse 21,
that

that we receive with Meekness the engraft-
ed Word; the Consequence whereof he
tells us will be, the Salvation of our Souls.

SERM.
VI.
~~~~~

BUT lest we should so far misunderstand him, as to think we have done enough, in order to the Attainment of eternal Happiness, if we have barely paid an outward Attention to the Word of God; if we have received it with our Ears, but not suffered it to sink down into our Hearts, so as to bring forth in us the Fruit of good Living; he thinks fit farther to subjoin this Caution, *But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* And what Kind of Self-deceit this is, he proceeds to show us in the Words of my Text, by a very familiar and easy Comparison, *For if any be a Hearer, &c.*

BY *the Word* we are here to understand the revealed Will of God, which his eternal Son came down from Heaven, on purpose to declare to us, and which he most effectually did in those exalted and refined Precepts which he delivered first to his Disciples, and by their Ministry to all succeeding Generations: That Evan-

SERM. gelical Institution, which the Apostle, in

VI. the Verse following my Text, calls *the perfect Law of Liberty*, which was published with a Design, not totally to abolish and out-date, but to complete and refine upon the Old one, by removing whatsoever was burdensome and superfluous in it, and confirming such Things as carried with them an eternal and necessary Obligation, being itself inserted into, and incorporated with them: For which Reason it is probably called *the engrafted Word*, the λόγος ἐμφυτός.

IN short, by the Word is to be understood, all that it concerns us to believe or practice in order to our present and future Well-being, whether we immediately consult the Letter of Holy Scripture, where our Duty is taught at large and in general Terms, or hear it applied by the Ministers and Dispensers of it to our particular Occasions.

As therefore when we behold ourselves in a Glass, it impartially reflects the outward Features and Lineaments of our natural Visage, in their full Proportion and just Dimensions, so as neither invidiously  
to



to obscure the Ornaments and Graces, nor SERM.  
obsequiously conceal the Blemishes and V.  
Defects of it; so when we consult the  
Word of God, it no less impartially re-  
presents to us, in most exact and lively  
Colours, the Guise and Complexion of the  
inward Man, together with all the Virtues  
that beautify and adorn it, and all the Sins  
and Imperfections, with which it is sullied  
and defaced.

AND consequently he that barely hears,  
without ever reducing it to Practice, may  
very fitly be compared to a Man that surveys  
himself in a Glass, on purpose to observe if  
any Thing about him is unseemly or mis-  
becoming: and though he cannot but see  
something amiss, yet takes no farther Care  
to rectify or adjust it.

It is true, in these Slips and Miscarriages  
of lesser Importance, we are usually more  
nice and scrupulous, and seldom fail of cor-  
recting them, as soon as discovered, for  
Fear of exposing ourselves to Scorn and  
Laughter. But alas! how easily do we  
overlook those monstrous Sins and Impie-  
ties which debase and vilify our more no-  
ble Part, which blacken and deform the  
Soul,

SERM. Soul, and expose us, not to the ridiculous

VI. Censures of a Croud, but to the severest

Wrath and Displeasure of an angry God.

Though we are never so often, never so seriously admonished of the extreme Turpitude and Enormity of these Offences, though we are told how odious they are in the Sight of God, how mean and unworthy of a rational Creature, and what fatal Consequences they will certainly produce, if we do not speedily forsake and amend them; yet how rarely does such Advice prevail with us to abandon our beloved Vices, or work in us a Reformation of Manners! Though we see the Deformity of these Vices reflected in a most terrible and glaring Light, though the Gospel denounces eternal Woe against them, and its Ministers cry aloud and spare not; yet, in Despite of all Warning, we obstinately persist in our former Evil Practices, and are unable to abstain from the Commission, though we are convinced of the Folly and Danger of them.

IT is natural enough, I confess, for a Man to be somewhat startled and surprized at the Ghastly Figure which he makes, when

when thus exposed in his native Hue and SERM.  
Complexion, without the Advantage of VI.  
any counterfeit Graces to cover and pal-  
liate his Defects: But however, no sooner  
does the frightful Image disappear, but the  
Idea and Remembrance of it is buried too;  
no sooner has he beheld himself in this  
spiritual Mirrour, but he goeth his Way,  
and straitway forgets what Manner of Man  
he was.

HAVING thus briefly considered the Fit-  
ness of the Emblem, which the Apostle  
here makes Use of to represent a Hearer  
of the Word and not a Doer; I shall in  
the farther Prosecution of this Subject in-  
sist on the following Particulars.

*First,* What is the great End and De-  
sign of God's Word read or preach-  
ed, namely, to lay us open to our-  
selves, and let us see what Manner  
of Men we are, in order to make us  
such as we ought to be.

*Secondly,* To how bad Purposes, this ex-  
cellent Design is perverted and abused  
by some Sorts of Men.

*Thirdly,*



*Thirdly*, I shall conclude with a practical Inference or two.

*First*, WHAT is the great End and Design, &c.

Now to this End it greatly contributes, by making a full and ample Discovery of the Nature and Obligation of every Christian Duty, by reminding us of the Covenant between God and us, and frequently inculcating the Terms and Conditions on which our eternal Happiness or Misery depends; and lastly, by putting us on reflecting on our own Actions, by which Means each individual Person may be made truly sensible how far he, for his Part, is entitled to those Promises that are annexed to the Performance, and wherein obnoxious to that Punishment, which will infallibly attend the Violation of them.

HITHER therefore must every one, who is at any Uncertainty, as to his spiritual State and Condition, have Recourse, from whence he may make a true Estimate of it, how far he is advanced in his Progress toward Heaven, or how near the Confines

*the true End of Hearing.*

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Confines of Hell, and in which of them SERM.  
he has just Reason to expect his Portion. VI.

THIS supplementary Revelation of God's Will might indeed have very well been spared, had Man retained his original Integrity; for then the Laws of Reason would have been sufficient to have directed each particular Person in all the Actions of his Life. But since the Corruption of our Nature by the Fall of our first Parents, those Laws have been so impaired, that there are very few, who, by the Light of their in-bred Knowledge, can distinguish true and solid Reason, from that which is false and counterfeit: And fewer yet of those that can discern between Good and Evil, who are endued with the clearest Notions, and fullest Perception of their Duty, will be fair and impartial Judges in their own Cause; they will readily enough own, that such or such Actions are base and dishonourable, that they make us degenerate from Men to Brutes, that they are inconsistent with the Dictates both of Reason and Religion, and extremely distasteful both to God and Man.

THEY

SERM.

VI.

THEY will severely censure and condemn the Practice of them in others; And on the contrary, they never fail to give Virtue its deserved Applause: They are big with the Praises of such Persons as are most eminent for their Piety, and remarkable for a strict and religious Deportment, who have walked uprightly, and maintained a clear and unblemished Character in the midst of a stubborn Generation, who have preserved a good Conscience in spite of all the Temptations of sensual Delights and worldly Grandeur.

BUT then, as if all Religion consisted in nice and empty Speculations, in magnifying Virtue, and crying down Immorality, they never apply these Notions to their own Case, nor consider how nearly they themselves are concerned in them, how widely their Words and Actions disagree, and how shamefully they offend against those very Rules which they prescribe to others.

As for their own Failings and Infirmities, though of never so high a Nature, they either wholly pass them by, without any Heed or Attention, or else extenuate  
and



and soften them with some little Evasion, SERM.  
or shroud them under some shallow and VI.  
insufficient Pretence; as if the self-same  
Thing which in others is a heinous Of-  
fence and Provocation, were none at all  
in them; or that by a peculiar Favour and  
Indulgence of God, they were absolved  
from their Obedience to those Laws, by  
which the rest of Mankind is indispensably  
obliged.

SINCE therefore Men will not reflect on  
their own Miscarriages with the same Se-  
verity they usually do on those of others;  
since some are so blind that they cannot,  
and others so stubborn that they will not  
see them; since if they were left to them-  
selves, there are some who would never  
think at all, and others who would always  
think amiss of their spiritual Condition, by  
persuading themselves that their Case is  
less dangerous than in Reality it is; it is  
highly requisite, in order to rectify that  
erroneous and deceitful Judgment which  
we are apt to pass in our own Favour,  
that we should make frequent Appeals,  
and submit our Cause to the fair and un-  
bias'd Decision of those written and re-  
vealed

SERM. vealed Truths, which were delivered to us  
 VI. as a sure and infallible Guide in all our  
 Doubts and Emergencies, and to be the  
 settled Standard and Criterion of Good and  
 Evil.

GREAT therefore are those sacred  
 Truths, and mighty above all Things,  
 abundantly sufficient to instruct us in that  
 most useful Knowledge of ourselves, to re-  
 move the causeless Fears and Jealousies of  
 good Men, and to quash the presumptu-  
 ous Hopes and groundless Confidence of  
 bad ones.

FROM hence only can we raise in our-  
 selves a firm Assurance of our own Inte-  
 grity ; insomuch that he who governs his  
 Life, and measures his Actions by any  
 other Rule, who seeks for Comfort either  
 from the good Opinion of others, who  
 not being able to discern that Treachery  
 and Deceitfulness of Heart which lurks  
 under a fair Outside and Form of Godli-  
 ness, may, through a mistaken Charity,  
 be induced to judge more favourably of  
 him than he deserves ; or else from the  
 infinite Mercy and Goodness of God, which  
 is not promised, nor will be granted on  
 any

any other Terms than those of a true lively S E R M.  
Faith, and an universal Obedience ; if he VI.  
sets up some other Guide in Opposition to  
God's known and indispensable Laws, by re-  
lying either on the uncertain Conduct of  
human Reason, or else on some counter-  
feit Rapture and Enthusiastick Heat, a  
Pretence to a more than ordinary Measure  
of the Spirit, and the preternatural Infu-  
sions of divine Light ; that Man's Reli-  
gion is vain, his Hope unwarrantable, and  
both are built on a very weak and sandy  
Foundation.

IN short, if we really have a Mind to  
know whose Subjects we are, to whose  
Kingdom we belong, and whether we are  
chiefly influenced by the Fear of God,  
and a true Sense of Religion, or by the Ir-  
rigations of Satan, and the enticing Al-  
lurements of Flesh and Sense ; let every  
Man put himself upon this Trial.

“ I FIND my self obliged by the strictest  
“ Ties, and under the severest Penalties,  
“ to the Observance of the Divine Ord-  
“ nances ; in Obedience whereunto, I  
“ must perform such Duties, and abstain  
“ from such unlawful Pleasures. Are my  
V O L. III. O “ Actions



SERM. " Actions agreeable to this Rule ? Have I

VI.

" performed what is thus enjoined, and  
 " refrained from that which is so prohi-  
 " bited ; or where I have been guilty of  
 " a Breach, have I been careful to repair  
 " it again by a hearty and cordial Repen-  
 " tance ? If so, I may certainly conclude  
 " that I am a Child of God, and in the  
 " direct Way that leads to Happiness and  
 " Salvation. But if otherwise, I am in  
 " the broad Way that leads to Destruction,  
 " and can lay no Claim to the Promises  
 " of the Gospel : But whether the one or  
 " the other, I have certainly got this Ad-  
 " vantage, by thus referring my self to  
 " the Word of God ; that although the  
 " Heart is deceitful above all Things,  
 " and desperately wicked, which made  
 " the Prophet ask with so much Diffi-  
 " dence and Distrust, *Who can know it ?*  
 " I am able to answer with a just Confi-  
 " dence and reasonable Assurance, As de-  
 " ceitful and wicked as it is, I both  
 " can, and do know it".

You see then what is the great End and  
 Design of the Gospel, that (if duly con-  
 sulted and attended to) it is purposely fra-  
 med

med to make us wiser, and by means of SERM.  
that Wisdom to make us better: That it VI.  
sets both our Vertues and Vices in their  
true and proper Light, together with all  
the powerful Motives and Persuasives in-  
viting to the one, and the severe and fatal  
Judgments deterring from the other.

AND surely would but Men endeavour  
seriously to convince themselves, as often  
as they repair to the House of God, how  
great, how useful, how necessary a Work  
they are undertaking, would they come  
with honest Hearts, with humble Minds  
and cordial Dispositions, duly prepared,  
and willing to be informed of such Things  
as they did not know, or to be put in Re-  
membrance of such as they had forgot,  
or did not sufficiently attend to; would  
they apply the Word of God to the true  
Use for which it was intended; it would  
have a greater Influence on their Manners,  
and they would give more evident and  
sensible Proofs of it in their Lives and  
Conversation, than they generally do; they  
would not hear, nor should we preach to  
so little Purpose, nor should we have so  
much Reason to complain that some Men,

SERM. instead of reaping any Benefit from our  
 VI. Doctrine, do only employ it to their own  
 Ruin and Destruction, as will farther appear  
 under my

*Second Particular*, where I am to show,  
 to how bad Purposes] this excellent De-  
 sign is perverted and abused by some Sorts  
 of Men.

As for those who wholly neglect and  
 live in open Defiance to the external Or-  
 dinances of Religion, who either are too  
 proud to think they need any Instructions,  
 or too much addicted to their Pleasures, to  
 allot any Part of their Time to the Ser-  
 vice of God; they do not fall under my  
 present Consideration, both because the  
 not using a Thing cannot so properly be  
 called an Abuse of it, and also because it  
 would be a vain and superfluous Attempt,  
 to direct my Discourse to such Persons,  
 whom the very Supposal of their not be-  
 ing so much as Hearers of the Word, ex-  
 cludes from being any Part of my Audi-  
 tory.

LEAVING therefore such Wretches as  
 are obstinately deaf to all Advice, to their  
 own



own voluntary Blindness, and the miserable State of Ignorance and Insensibility, in which they lie buried, let us pass on to those, who though they do hear the Word, and that frequently, yet it is either to no Purpose at all, or else a very ill one.

SERM.  
VI.  
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AND here the first I shall take Notice of, are the barren and unfruitful Hearers, [as being the Men, who are more immediately aimed at in my Text:] Men who pay a constant Attendance at the Places of publick Worship, who are willing enough to receive the Word, and listen to their Teachers, but like a degenerate and unthankful Soil, they make no Returns, nor answer the Care and Labour that is bestowed in cultivating and manuring them. Now under this Sort are comprehended, not only the Supine and inadvertent, the listless and unthinking Hearers, who are affected with the Sound, but not at all with the Sense of what is spoken, who tho' present in Body, are absent in Spirit; but too many of those also, who give greater Attention, who pay a due Respect and Veneration to the Word, and apply the distinguishing Marks of a good or a

SERM. bad Man to their own particular Per-  
 VI. sons.



No sooner do we describe the Nature of some mortal and contagious Vice, and shew what is the Rise and Progress, and what the Symptoms of it, but they begin to reflect, whether they themselves are free from the Infection or not; no sooner do we represent a proud and imperious, a malicious and revengeful, a lewd and intemperate Man, but many a guilty Wretch, whose Conscience stares him in the Face, looks back with Horror on his own Actions, and cannot forbear to say within himself,

“ I AM that base unworthy Man whose  
 “ Character is here displayed; that Pride  
 “ and Cruelty, those Excesses and Enor-  
 “ mities are all my own, the odious Pic-  
 “ ture resembles me too nearly, and every  
 “ Feature is as like, as if it were drawn  
 “ on Purpose for me.” Now such Men  
 as these do indeed truly answer the first  
 Part of that great End and Design of the  
 Word before-mentioned, inasmuch as it  
 serves them for a Glass, by inspecting  
 whereof, they become truly sensible what  
Manner

Manner of Men they are. But then, as SERM.  
to the other Part of it, the making them VI.  
such as they ought to be, they render it   
wholly ineffectual; they only take a short  
and transitory View, lively enough per-  
haps for the present, but which leaves no  
lasting and substantial Images behind it,  
produces no Effects beyond itself, and all  
its Impressions terminate in the very Act  
of beholding.

AND what a Pity is it, when a Man is  
arrived thus far, and has made so confi-  
derable a Progress in the Christian Race,  
when he is convinced of the sick and  
languishing Estate of his Soul, and sees by  
what Means it is continually wasted and  
impaired, and what is the only sure and  
effectual Remedy, by which it can be re-  
covered: When he is grown patient of  
Reproof, of a teachable Disposition, when  
he can hear, without Offence, the most  
severe and bitter Invectives against his dar-  
ling Lusts, when he can hear the impeni-  
tent Sinner branded with the Marks of  
Folly, Brutishness and Madness, and con-  
fess that he himself deservedly falls under  
those ungrateful Characters; what a Pity



SERM. is it, I say, that, after all this, he should

**VI.** stop so soon, without profiting by his Conviction, without digesting his pious Resolutions into Action, without reforming any one of those Vices, which he has so heartily acknowledged and bewailed !

AND yet so it is : For though the Word of God is so powerful and prevailing that it will sometimes extort such Confessions even from Men of corrupt and dissolute Lives, yet, on the other Hand, so alluring are the Temptations of the World, the great Enemy of Mankind so watchful for our Ruine, the Propensity of a vicious Nature, and the Sway of evil Custom so hard to be resisted, that they frequently baffle the Measures, and elude the Holy Purposes of such as are not well armed with Courage and Constancy against them, and make them relapse into those very Sins, which but just before they had solemnly renounced.

THUS do Men divide between God and their Lusts, each of which does by turns lose and regain the Ascendant over them : But with this Difference, that they think they have done enough, if they have paid  
God

God a few empty Acknowledgements, SERM.  
VI.  
whilst they dedicate almost their whole Life, and all the Studies and Endeavours of it, to the Service of their disorderly Appetites, and the Gratifications of Sense.

It cannot indeed be denied, but that to know and be convinced of one's Errors, is one great Step toward the Amendment of them: But yet how likely a Means soever it may seem, it is certain it very often fails. *Saul* could readily enough acknowledge, that *David* was more righteous than he, in that he had requited him Good for Evil. But though he was persuaded of his Innocence, the Spirit of Envy soon returned upon him, so that he could not forbear to persecute that righteous Man, and seek the Life of him, by whom he knew and confessed his own to have been spared.

Just thus vain and ineffectual is the Remorse and Compunction of every irresolute and unstable Christian. When he hears the Nature of God and his Attributes explained, how his Mercy tempers the Severity of his Justice, how heartily he hates the Sin, and yet how tenderly he  
loves

SERM. loves the Sinner, how we daily forfeit his

VI. Favour, and how he daily remits the Forfeiture; during, I say, this impartial Prospect and Survey of the Goodness of God and his own Unworthiness, like the Skirt which *David* held up, it twits and upbraids him with his ungenerous Proceeding. He looks on himself as something of a very savage and untractable Kind, that could continue to rebel against so indulgent and gracious a Master, that could not be softened or civilized by such winning Usage and obliging Treatment.

BUT as soon as Time and Company have worn off these Impressions of his Guilt, such melancholy Thoughts and Self-accusations are succeeded by Reflections of quite another Nature. He then reassumes his former Confidence, and begins thus to expostulate with himself. "Where  
 " is that foul mishapen Monster which I  
 " just now beheld? I am no Wolf nor  
 " Tyger, no wild Inhabitant of the De-  
 " sert, but endued with a human Shape  
 " and Faculties, a Man, wherein Human-  
 " ty most properly consists, a Rational  
 " and a Sociable," could'st thou but have  
 added,



added, "and a Religious," Creature, thou hadst argued rightly ; for that is the noblest Prerogative of Man, to be the Servant and Subject of God. SERM.  
VI.

BUT any Excuse will serve to silence the Clamours, and allay the dismal Apprehensions of an awakened Conscience, so willing are we to be cheated in a Matter of the utmost Consequence, so easily do the deceitful Pleasures of Sin disguise us from ourselves, and by so doing choak the good Seed which was sown in us, and make it become unfruitful.

AND thus much for these Men, who hear the Word of God to little or no Purpose ; but these however are more tolerable than others, who employ it to ill Uses : Of which Sort are

THOSE Persons, who repair to religious Assemblies, not with a Design either to please God, or to be improved and bettered by what they hear, but in order to gain themselves a Reputation, and pass upon the World for Men of Conscience and Integrity, that so they may with greater Ease, and less Suspicion, commit the most base and treacherous Actions, whilst

SERM. whilst the Perfidiousness of their Hearts is

VI.  hid under a seemingly demure and sanctified Behaviour. I do not deny but that it is lawful, and in many Cases a necessary Duty incumbent on us, to make an outward Profession of our Piety, *to let our Light shine before Men*, openly to avow, nay, even to boast of our good Deeds, provided our glorying be in the Lord, if we do it not thro' a vain Ostentation, but with a pious Zeal and sincere Endeavour to excite and invigorate others by our good Example, to the Practice of the like Duties.

Our Saviour compares his Church to a City built upon a Hill, and consequently he that ascends thither, cannot well, neither ought he to avoid being conspicuous, that he may animate and encourage others to come up after him. But he that comes thither with no other Design but to be seen of Men, who makes that his principal End, which ought at best but to be an occasional and subordinate one, might much better have staid below.

It is a Piece of dangerous Mockery and Trifling with God, to make a Show of  
pleasing

pleasing him, while we are labouring to SERM.  
please Men ; to make his Glory the Pre- VI.  
tence, while our own is at the Bottom.

But how bold soever such Men may make with him now, they will one Day find to their Cost, who it is they have thus impudently dallied with, when he shall pull off their Disguise, expose their most crafty Villanies and Impostures to the View and Scorn of the Universe, and appoint them their Portion with their Fellow-Hypocrites.

AND now my Subject would naturally lead me to another Sort of perverse Hearers, Men openly profane and irreligious, who are not contented to contemn the Almighty in private, unless they insult him too in publick by a rude and irreverent Behaviour in his House : Men who turn the Grace of God itself into Lasciviousness, and suck out Poison from the most wholesome Nourishment : Who come together not for Edification, but for Destruction, not as Members or Profelytes, but as Spies, in Hopes they shall discover some Nakedness in the Land, and furnish themselves with Arguments, not to support



SERM. port their own Faith; but to overthrow  
VI. that of others.

THE Scripture is fitly compared by the Apostle to a two-edged Sword, it is bright and sharp enough to defend the Truth against all Gain-sayers, when in the Hands of one who is both able and willing to use it right; for otherwise, with that very Sword an unskilful Man may wound himself, and a malicious Man may destroy others. They may, I say, and I wish we have not too many Instances that they do so too.

BUT I hope I shall not need to use any Invectives, to possess you with a just Abhorrence of such Proceedings; for I am willing to believe, that none who hears me this Day, is come with so bad a Purpose. And I hope that none of us will envy such profane Scoffers the imaginary Satisfaction of laughing for a few Moments, who considers what the End of it will be, that they must weep and howl to all Eternity,

I SHALL now conclude all with two short Inferences. And,

I. SINCE

I. SINCE, as has been shewn in my SERM.  
first Particular, the Word of God is di- VI.  
rected to so good an End, since from a  
true Use of it so much Benefit may be  
received, let us take the Advice of the  
Apostle in the Chapter of my Text, *and*  
*be swift to hear*; let us omit no Opportu-  
nity of improving our selves in that spiri-  
tual Knowledge, nor forsake the assem-  
bling ourselves together, as the Manner  
of some is. Let us duly esteem and value  
our own Privilege, that in the great Con-  
cern of our Souls, we are not abandoned  
to the unsteddy Conduct of our own ca-  
pricious Fancy and Humour, not given up  
to wild and irregular Wandrings, nor left  
in a dark Uncertainty. But that we have,  
as St. Peter says, *2 Epist. i. 19. a sure*  
*Word of Prophecy* [to trust to] *whereunto*  
*ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light*  
*that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day*  
*dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your*  
*Hearts*: That by the Help of this bright  
and auspicious Light we may not only see  
our Way as it lies before us, but if we  
look back through those several Stages we  
have

SERM. have already passed, we may clearly discern, whether we are come right thus far or not, whether we have kept all along in the direct Way to Heaven, or have declined into Error and Disobedience. And if upon a careful Retrospection, we perceive that our Steps have gone out of the Way, that we have so fair a Prospect of rectifying our Mistake, and by a seasonable Warning of our Danger, are made ashamed of our foolish Aims and unworthy Pursuits. Nor let any Man absent himself from the Congregation of the Faithful, and deprive himself of such spiritual Instruction, from a Perswasion that he does not need it, and is already sufficiently instructed. But though the Advantages of Hearing are so great, and the Design so good, yet since, as has been likewise shewn, that excellent Design may so many ways be perverted and abused, it is necessary that I farther Caution you in the

*Second Place,* To take Heed how you hear, *i. e.* come not hither with a careless Indifference, with drowsiness and oscitancy,



tancy, but with a heedful Application of SERM.  
Mind, and Intention of Thought. Come VI.

not to be seen of Men, but by him who seeth in Secret, and will reward openly. Come not merely because it is the Custom, or to pass away a Leisure Hour or two you would otherwise be at a Loss to dispose, but through a just Sense of the great and urgent Need you have of being instructed in, or at least admonished of your Duty, though it be never so well known. Come not to applaud the Performance or condemn the Insufficiency of the Preacher, but to edify and improve by his Doctrine, how meanly soever it is delivered. In a Word, come not barely to see your Faults, but to correct and amend them; be not content to receive the Word, but moreover retain and cherish it; suffer no dead unactive Notions to lye dormant in you, but vigorously exert them; so shall you partake of the Blessing promised by the Apostle in the Verse following my Text. *But whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty, and con-*

208      *The Direction of Practice, &c.*

SERM. *tinueth therein, he being not a forgetful*

VI. *Hearer, but a Doer of the Work, that Man*  
*shall be blessed in his Deed.*



SERMON



# S E R M O N VII.

The Folly of Ill Men, in reproaching the Good.



I PET. IV. 4, 5.

*Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of you : Who shall give Account to him that is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead.*



HERE is nothing in this Passage so doubtful or obscure, as to require any Paraphrase or Explication : The Meaning of the Place discovers itself at the first View, and needs no Help of the Context or De-

P 2

finition



SERM. finition of the Terms to make it plainer

VII. You may easily conceive that some very  
 gross and enormous Crimes had been mentioned in the precedent Verse, which make up that Excess of Riot spoken of in this, in which whilst some Men continued to indulge themselves without Check or Controul, whilst they were revelling in the Height of their imaginary Enjoyments, they thought it strange that any should be so dull and phlegmatick, as not to join in their Mirth, and bear a part in their Extravagance. Thus a Madman and Persons in their Senses are equally Monsters to one another, and whilst they stand gazing at his fantastical Freaks and ridiculous Gestures, he wonders no less at their Sobriety and Composedness, and looks with a scornful Pity on those ignorant unhappy Wretches, who know nothing of the Pleasure of raving, of swaying invisible Scepters, and ruling imaginary Kingdoms. They think it strange, says the Apostle, that you run not with them to the same Excess, and not only so, but they speak Evil of you.

THIS

THIS is a Treatment, which Persons of SERM.  
strict Morals, and an upright Conversation VII.  
must always expect to meet with from the  
lewd and dissolute. And he that is resolved  
to be remarkably good and virtuous, in Defi-  
ance of prevailing Custom, and in the  
midst of a degenerate Age, must expect  
to be ill used, and prepare himself against  
the Attempts of ungodly and malicious  
Persons. Such has always been the Fate  
of eminent Virtue and a distinguishing De-  
gree of Piety, as to expose a Man to the  
Censure and Hatred of those, who not-  
withstanding inwardly reverence and  
esteem it. Need I prove this to you by  
Instances of sacred or prophane History,  
or lead you back to the Chronicles of those  
illustrious Worthies of *St. Paul* to be con-  
vinced, that though they wrought Righte-  
ousness, and stopt the Mouths of Lions,  
they could never stop that of Envy and  
Detraction? Or does not every Man's Ex-  
perience and Observation sufficiently con-  
vince him, that this is the Case even in  
our own Times, and that he who pretends  
to a greater Measure of Holiness than his  
Neighbours, had Need stand well on his

SERM. Guard, if he hopes to escape the Lash of  
 VII. Slanderous and defaming Tongues. I shall  
 take it for granted then, that the Case is  
 true in Fact, and proceed to the following  
 Enquiries.

*First*, How it comes to pass, that loose  
 and profligate Persons are always re-  
 proaching and calumniating good  
 ones.

*Secondly*, What Sort of Reproaches they  
 usually cast upon them.

*Thirdly*, How a wise and good Man  
 ought to behave himself under such  
 Calumny.

*Fourthly*, What will be the Event here-  
 after of such an Enmity to God and  
 Goodness: *They must give Account to  
 him that is ready to judge the Quick  
 and Dead.*

*First*, How it comes to pass, that loose  
 and profligate Persons are always reproach-  
 ing and calumniating good ones. Would  
 not



not one on the contrary imagine, that a SERM.  
good Man, whose Principle (if really so) VII.  
it is to shew an universal Benevolence, and  
to promote, as far as he is able, the Inter-  
est and Happiness of all he converses  
with; who is ready upon every Occasion  
to assist and befriend his Neighbours with  
all the good Offices in his Power, and ne-  
ver provokes them by any ill ones; would  
not one imagine, I say, that such a Per-  
son as this should be the Darling of all that  
know him, and be looked upon as the com-  
mon Friend or Parent, instead of being  
detested as the common Enemy?

BUT here indeed lies the great Provo-  
cation; the Generality of Mankind are vi-  
tious and depraved, and so long as they  
are herded in a Croud, and meet with  
none much better than themselves, they  
can go on in their Course without Distur-  
bance or Interruption, they can offend  
without blushing, and sin without Remorse.  
Whereas if some bright and illustrious  
Pattern of Piety and true Worth shall hap-  
pen to arise among them, (as, blessed be  
God! some such Examples are not want-  
ing even in a corrupt and lascivious Ge-  
neration,

SERM. neration,) when a Merit so eminently superior is placed so near them, that a comparison between them cannot be avoided, they perceive themselves so shamefully foiled, and their Blemishes appear so remarkable both to themselves and others, that they cannot bear the disgraceful Parallel, and therefore with an ungenerous Emulation, which aspires not to rise to his Character, but to bring his down to a Level with their own, they make it their Business by all the little Arts of Malice and Insinuation to detract from his true Worth, and put false Colours on his Actions. Let his real Desert be never so great, so long as it is the Means of making their Faults conspicuous, they think they have no great Reason to thank him for it, they look upon his Reputation as built upon the Ruin of theirs, and those just Commendations, which are given him by Men of Sense and Probity, as a Satyr (and indeed they are so in Effect) upon themselves; and as their own Conscience cannot chuse but condemn them in the Things which they allow, so they are sensible that he condemns them also in not allowing the same

same Things : and therefore it seems to SERM.  
them a piece of just and necessary VII.  
Revenge to revile him by their Words, who reviles  
them by his Actions : And the Sense of  
that Shame which he thus reflects on them  
by his Example, outweighs all other Con-  
siderations of the Advantages of his Friend-  
ship and the Benefits of his Conversation.  
Thus Men, whose Deeds are dark, and  
will not bear to be exposed to open View,  
hate even the Sun that lights and warms  
them, because it discovers what they had  
rather have concealed. By such continual  
Discouragements they hope at last to make  
him weary of his Virtue, and to gain  
him over to their Party, or at least that  
they shall hinder others from joining him,  
so as still to keep a Number on their Side,  
and not be forced to be as singular in Vice  
as he is in Virtue. So unwilling are ill  
Men to strive for the Kingdom of Heaven  
themselves, and so industrious to keep out  
others that are entering in. Though they  
advance but slowly in the Race themselves,  
they care not to be outstript, and he that  
is so active as to get the start of them,  
shall be sure of their Endeavours to pull  
him



SERM. him back. So disingenuously do these  
 VII. Men labour to spoil others rather than  
 mend themselves, and decry that Virtue they  
 dare not imitate. I come now in the

*Second Place*, to consider what Sort of Reproaches they usually cast upon good Men. I shall not pretend to enumerate all the various Artifices, which ingenious Malice has invented to blast the Character and fully the Reputation of conscientious and pious Christians, most of which are dark and crooked like their Author, and like him their Name is Legion. However there are three more obvious and principal Methods, by which such Instruments of his do more frequently proceed, all which I shall briefly consider. And they are the upbraiding the sincere Professors of Religion with the Character either of Cowards, or Hypocrites, or lastly, of morose and unsociable Persons.

*First*, They asperse them as Cowards or timorous Persons, *i. e.* if a Man has any Fear of God, or Sense of Religion left, and will not partake in every extravagant Adventure, nor run with them to the same Excess of Riot, he shall be ridiculed

as one of no Courage or Confidence, one SERM.  
VII.  
that is scared by a few idle Stories, and  
has so little Sense as to believe the fabulous  
Traditions of Religion and another Life.

BUT certainly a well-grounded Fear and reasonable Caution, was never by any wise Man accounted Cowardise. Is he a Coward, who goes out of his Way to avoid a dangerous Pit, and does not throw himself headlong into it? Or he, that shuts up his Doors at Night to keep out Thieves and Robbers? Or he, that lays up Provision for himself and Family against a Time of Scarcity? Or he, that has Recourse to proper Remedies, when he feels the Symptoms of an approaching Distemper? Is not such a Fear as this interwoven in our very Frame as a necessary Preservative of Life, by giving Nature a seasonable Alarm, and putting her on her Guard? And is not the Soul of infinitely greater Value than the Body, and consequently an Apprehension of miscarrying in so tender a Part much more justifiable? Nay indeed what can justify the Want of such an Apprehension?

SERM. So that the Libertine after all is that

VII.  arrantest Coward, who is afraid to fear what he ought to fear. He cannot stand the Shock of such dismal Imaginations, and therefore chuses rather to rush blindfold into the Danger, than manfully endeavour to escape it. Shall he be reputed Valiant, who cannot bear up under a little present Uneasiness, nor undergo the necessary Discipline of a short Vacation from Pleasures? Who has not the Courage to despise what he knows to be despicable, nor dares to vindicate what he sees and knows to be truly honourable? No certainly, a Man that will thus poorly belie his Principles, and act in Defiance of his own Judgment, only for fear of being thought a Coward, deserves that Character he so solicitously avoids. His Courage (as he calls it) which was never shewn but in drunken Broils, and lewd Rencontres, is generally owing to his Constitution, and proceeds from an Opinion of his Strength of Limbs, and the Toughness of his Composition. But as that wears away, his Valour declines in Proportion with it; and we often see these blustering



blustering Hectors, who carry all Things SERM.  
by dint of Force, and over-awe their VII.  
Neighbours into a Compliance with their   
Humour, when once their Body is ener-  
vated, and consequently their Mind (which  
had no other Support but the Hardiness of  
the other) dispirited, become at last such  
abject Wretches, as to deserve the Pity of  
those, to whom before they were a Ter-  
ror.

BUT a true Christian's Valour is founded  
on a surer Bottom, and is not to be bro-  
ken by such petty Discouragements: His  
Resolution grows stronger as his bodily  
Strength decays, and he looks Death and  
Misfortunes in the Face with a decent As-  
surance and manly Confidence.

ONE of the principal Marks of Forti-  
tude is, that it be steady, uniform, and  
constant, which certainly belongs in a  
more peculiar Manner to such as are most  
Vigorous and Active in the Course of  
Piety and Virtue.

HE that is bold and resolute in oppo-  
sing Vice, can never have any Reason to  
wish he had acted otherwise: Whereas he  
that is bold in the Commission of it, will  
one

SERM. one Day be glad to retract his Errors, and  
 VII. ask Pardon for his Miscarriages (which,  
 if you will believe his own Notions of Honour, is no great Argument of Bravery.)

ANOTHER Property of Fortitude is, that it be rational and proportioned to our Strength and Abilities: To attempt Things impossible, and which far exceed the Reach of our natural Powers, is not Courage, but Rashness and Temerity; nay, it is Rage and Frenzy. Now whether the daring Sinner, that fights with Heaven, or the Religious Hero, that combats Hell, is most rational in his Enterprizes, I shall not need to determine.

IN Summ, That Fear is only scandalous and disgraceful, which is causeless, and without any just Grounds. But such is not that of a good Man: He knows what, and whom, and why he fears. It is *the Wicked that flies when none pursue, but the Righteous is bold as a Lion.* So that upon the whole Matter it appears, that Vice is the worst Cowardise, and the Fear of God the truest Valour.

BUT,

BUT, 2dly, Another Name of Ignominy which irreligious Men are wont to cast on the Professors of true Piety, is, that of Hypocrites : And this Character indeed we cannot pretend to retort upon themselves, as we did that of Cowardise. For, to give them their due, they have as much Religion as they pretend to, *i. e.* none at all. Nay perhaps they have more than they will own, and whilst they renounce it with their Tongue, believe it in their Heart, which has been the Case of many of them by their own Confession. There have indeed been too many, who by a Life ill suited to the large Professions they made of a more than ordinary Sanctity, and such Practices in Secret, as were very inconsistent with the Character they assumed in publick, by making a Gain of Godliness, and prostituting Religion to secular Ends, have too much contributed to such Aspersions, and given too fair a Handle for such uncharitable Censures.

BUT because there will be Knaves in all Disguises, shall we thence conclude that there is no Man honest ? If we were always

SERM.  
VII.



**SERM.** ways to argue at this Rate, there would  
**VII.** be an End of that mutual Confidence between Man and Man, and all civil Correspondence must cease. It is very difficult, I confess, to discover the inward Sentiments of another, and to be sure that he means what he professes: However, every Man has a natural Right to be well thought of, till by the Insincerity of his outward Behaviour he has forfeited that Right. It is possible, indeed, that all his good Actions may proceed from corrupt Motives, his seeming Devotion may be directed to some worldly Prospect, and his Charity may be all Ostentation (for which, if so, he will be one Day severely accountable to the great Searcher of Hearts, who will appoint him his Portion with his Fellow Hypocrites.) However, in the meantime, the Libertine has very little Reason to reproach him, for as much as his Actions at least are commendable and beneficial, whatever his Intentions are, whereas he himself neither acts nor means well.

It is certain they are both bad enough in Conscience, and I shall not now dispute whether of the two is worse, or  
 which

which of them does Religion the most SERM.  
VII.  
Harm, the openly profane, or the disse-  
mbling Hypocrite, who though he may  
accidentally be the Author of much Good,  
may promote the Cause of Piety, and by  
his seeming Godliness excite others to be  
really holy and devout, so long as he pas-  
ses undiscovered ; yet when once his Dis-  
guise is off, he gives it a deep and dange-  
rous Wound : Then every good Man's  
Sincerity is called in Question, they are  
all equally taken for such false Pretenders,  
and suspected of the same hidden Vices of  
which the other is convicted.

AN Hypocrite indeed is a very odious  
and reproachful Name, which makes some  
Men so immoderately careful to avoid it,  
that they are resolved to have Nothing at  
all to do with Virtue, lest it should be  
mistaken for Hypocrisy ; which is as if a  
Man should throw away a Jewel of great  
Value, for fear it should be taken for a  
Counterfeit.

THIS is a fatal Rock on which many  
have split, and one of the most successful  
Engines the Devil and his Accomplices  
ever made use of to discountenance true

SERM. Religion. A Man whose Behaviour has  
 VII. been so upright and unblameable, as to  
 be obnoxious to no other Censure, is al-  
 ways liable to this, if Men will have so  
 little Conscience as to fasten the Imputation  
 on him. Besides, some Actions are of  
 such an indifferent middle Nature, and so  
 undistinguishable by their outward Ap-  
 pearances, that according to the different  
 Intention wherewith they are performed,  
 they may be denominated either virtuous  
 or vicious ; so that in this Case, a Man  
 that acts with never so honest a Design, is  
 still at the Mercy of others, who are at  
 Liberty to believe what they think fit.  
 All that an innocent Person is capable of  
 doing, in order to clear himself from  
 such a false Suggestion, is, by Simpli-  
 city and Candour in his Words, by O-  
 penness and Integrity in his Actions, to  
 give the best Demonstration he can of a  
 sound Heart and sincere Intention. But if  
 after all Men will still be so unreasonably  
 suspicious, as without Cause, and against  
 Proof, to doubt of his Honesty, and charge  
 him with a latent Hypocrisy, he must  
 quietly submit to the unjust Reproach, and  
 comfort



comfort himself with the Assurance, that SERM.  
though they can blacken him before Men, VII.  
and stain his Reputation, yet so long as he  
is conscious of his own inward Purity,  
they cannot disturb the Peace of his own  
Breast, nor make him appear as deformed  
to himself; as they have represented him  
to the World; that his own Heart does  
not condemn him, to which he can ap-  
peal with a just Confidence; and to God,  
who is greater than his Heart, and know-  
eth all Things: The

*3d and last* Mark of Infamy I shall in-  
sist on, by which debauched and dissolute  
Persons endeavour to discourage others  
from the Profession and Practice of Reli-  
gion, is, the upbraiding them as morose  
and unsociable Men: How far some false  
Pretenders to severe Morals and strict Dis-  
cipline may deserve this Imputation, is a-  
nother Question; who set up for reforming  
others with no other Qualification; but a  
peevish Temper, and ungovernable Zeal,  
without a sufficient Stock of Piety to cor-  
rect the one, or Prudence to direct the  
other; who abstain indeed from carnal,  
but give themselves up to spiritual Lusts:

*Q 2**They*

SERM. They are far enough from Intemperance  
 VII. and Lewdness, but they make no Scruple  
 of being debauch'd with Pride, and drunk  
 with Rage ; and whilst they chain up the  
 concupiscible Appetites, they let the irascible loose : They seek not the Sinner's  
 Reformation, but his Ruin, and would be  
 strangely disappointed if all Mankind should  
 take them at their Word, and live up to  
 their own Rules, because there would be no  
 Matter of Scandal left, nor Subject of Complaint ; there would be none, whose Vices  
 they might impute to themselves as Virtues,  
 and over whom they might insult with a  
 Pharisaical Pride, and say, *I am not as this  
 Publican.* Such Men, I say, there are,  
 and their ill Humour (as it usually happens) is made a general Case, and the Reflection is cast on all without Distinction,  
 who pretend to regulate the Manners of  
 the Age, and to make Men wiser and  
 better by their Instructions, they are  
 called morose and unfociable.

THIS, I confess, is a Character a Man  
 would not be very fond of, could he fairly  
 and honestly avoid it, and many a righteous Man is willing to compound with  
 them

them for their good Word, by a Compliance with their Humour in such Things as he lawfully and innocently may. But it is not such a Compliance that will satisfy them. A Man must run with them to the same Excess of Riot, or they will think it strange, and speak evil of him. If he once offers to stop short, and prescribe Bounds to their Mirth; if he pretends to confine them to the Rules of Religion and Reason, they renounce him as a sour and snarling Cynic, that takes an ill-natured Pleasure in crossing the Inclinations of others, and condemning every Thing which they approve: They will not allow that he has any Thing of Humanity, though at the same Time he is endeavouring to persuade them to what is most humane, and most becoming the Dignity of a rational Creature: They oppose him as a Sort of common Adversary, and conclude he must needs hate them, because he hates their Vices. In short, they industriously shun his Conversation, and keep as far off as they can from a Man of such a churlish, reforming Spirit, as maliciously employs his Time in nothing



SERM. else but in endeavouring to mend Man-  
 VII. ners, and spoil Company. But sure such  
 Men have a wretched Opinion of Society,  
 who imagine there can be no such Thing  
 but among Rakes and Libertines, and that  
 Conversation cannot be agreeable without  
 the Relish of a Debauch.

Now whether is the greater Friend to  
 Society, he that helps to refine Conversa-  
 tion, and make it innocent and useful, or  
 he that will converse in no other Manner,  
 and but on such Terms, as must necessa-  
 rily end in Discord and Confusion ?

LET ungodly Men then rail at the Vir-  
 tuous for being singular and fullen ; let  
 them ridicule the Heaviness of their Fan-  
 cy, their stiff Adherence to Morality, and  
 their No-taste of Wit and Humour. In  
 the mean Time they have the Satisfaction  
 of reflecting, that no Authority or Persua-  
 sion could shake their Principles, or en-  
 gage them in evil Practices, and are firm-  
 ly resolved never to pay so dear for good  
 Company, (so called) as to purchase it  
 with Ill-manners. And this minds me  
 of my

*Third General*, viz. How a wise and good Man ought to behave himself under such Calumny. I have already anticipated somewhat that might be here offered, in speaking to the particular Instances and Kinds of Aspersions under the last Head. However, there are some more general Directions, that may be given with relation to all Kinds or Degrees of it. As

1<sup>st</sup>. LET him suffer it with Gentleness and Patience. I do not mean, that a Man ought to be so tame and passive, as to let another rob him of his good Name, and load him with undeserved Reproaches, without endeavouring to vindicate his Character, and make his Innocence appear by just and legal Proofs. This is an unalienable Privilege and Birth-right, of which no Man can be debarred: Nay, he himself cannot fairly recede from it. It is a Piece of necessary Justice he owes himself and the Truth, not to betray his Cause, but to clear his injured Reputation as fully as he can.

BUT by suffering with Patience and Gentleness, I mean, that he should not be so far provoked by any ill Usage, as to

SERM. treat another in the same Manner, and

VII.  return Railing for Railing, or Censure for Censure; not to be transported with furious Rage and immoderate Resentment, which does sometimes betray Men into great Inconveniences, and verifies the Character they are labouring to disprove: In-  
somuch that more Credit may be lost in the unbecoming Defence of a good Cause, than the fullest Conviction of a bad one. Let him be careful then so to do Justice to himself, as not to transgress the Law of Charity towards his Neighbour.

2. If he cannot silence and suppress such Slanders, let him learn to despise them. It is, I confess, a hard Lesson, and very difficult to be practised, when we exhort an ingenuous Person not to be concerned for his Reputation: A Good Name is the fairest Part of a Man's Inheritance, and whatever touches upon that, affects him in the tenderest Part. And I would be far from endeavouring to deaden that Principle, which is in some Measure the Life of Virtue, and weaken one of the Master-springs of good and laudable Actions.

NOR



NOR am I enjoining any one so impracticable a Task, as to court Disgrace, and make Ignominy his Choice. There is a Sense of Honour, which is so far from being inconsistent with Religion, that it is a Part of it. But when one's best Actions are imputed as Crimes, and Men endeavour to shame him by that which is his Glory, that very Sense of Honour will encline him to despise such Shame, as his Saviour did when he endured the Cross. Secure in his own Innocence, and acquitted by his Conscience, which is as good as a Thousand Witnesses, let him go on in his Course, and no more regard the Censure of maligning Tongues, than the deaf Adder does the Voice of the Charmer, which will disappoint them at least of one Part of their Aim, their Intention being as well to provoke and irritate the Person abused, as to lessen him in the Opinion of other Men: Nor is there any Thing which so effectually balks and baffles the Rage of a malicious Man, as when he perceives that his Blows make no Impression; that all the Fury of an envenomed Tongue, which he discharges on a good Man.

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VII.

SERM. Man, does not so much as stir or move

**VII.** him, that he seems not to feel, or be concerned at it, or to think himself aggrieved, Learn therefore to despise Calumny, and it will cease to pursue thee, regard not Malice, and it will fall of Course. But especially

3. HAVE a singular Care not to be so far terrified by the Reproaches of wicked Men, as to grow weary of thy Virtue, and forego thy Innocence and Integrity. Never comply with their pernicious Counsels to avoid the Effects of their Anger and Resentment, nor purchase thy Peace with them at the Expence of the Peace of thy own Breast. Keep firm and steady to thy Principle, and consent not to any Thing that is unlawful; for if once you begin to give Ground, you will soon be taken in their Nets, one unworthy Compliance will be made an Argument to draw on another, and if their Example is not sufficient to engage you in a wicked Action, they will press you with your own, and tell you 'tis no more than you have done already: And the same servile Fear of being exposed to their Ill-will by thy Refusal

Refusal to join with them, which first drew SERM.  
thee into their Fellowship, will hinder thy VII.  
Retreat.

LET it then be your principal Care to please God, and if the Approbation of Men follows, (as the Approbation of Good Men will follow) let it: But if on the contrary they should be displeased, and hate and revile you for it, consider that it is in a good Cause, and call to Remembrance the Saying of our blessed Saviour, *Blessed are you, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all Manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven. Matt. v. 11, 12.* How poor a Thing! of how little Weight or Consideration is that good or ill Opinion of an ill Man, in Comparifon of an eternal Re-compense! and will any Man for this offend his God, and grieve his Conscience, and renounce his Title to future Glory?

*Invidiam placare paras, virtute relicta?*  
*Contemnere miser* — was the Saying of an Heathen, and an admirable Good one. Poor Wretch! dost thou think to appease  
Envy,



SERM. Envy, by parting with thy Virtue? the

VII. Doing so will expose thee to Contempt, which is worse than Envy. Strange! that Men should be so much more afraid of being thought wicked than of being so, and industriously deserve an ill Character in order to avoid one.

To sum up this Advice then. Fear not them which wound your Reputation, and after that have no more that they can do; but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell, yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Which leads me to my

*Fourth and last Enquiry, viz.* What will be the Event hereafter of such an Enmity to God and Goodness as is visible in the Endeavours of wicked Men to blacken and defame the Righteous: They must give an Account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead; which will serve as a brief Application of the whole.

AND surely a very lame and wretched Account will such Men be able to give before the Tribunal of that Judge, of whose Kingdom they have been such profest

feſt Enemies : who have not only been SERM.  
Traytors themſelves, but made it their Bu- VII.

ſineſs to pervert others from their Allegiance, and cauſe a Revolt in Earth, as the Devil did in Heaven. Such Men have too juſt Reason to expect their Portion with the Devil and his Angels, who are poſſeſſed of ſo many diabolical Qualities. One would think that Drunkenneſs and Riot, Luſt and Envy, with a diſmal Catalogue of Sins beſides, ſhould be enough to ſink one poor Soul deep enough, and load him with a heavy Charge againſt the Day of Judgment, and that ſufficient for that Day ſhould be a Man's own Evil. But when he involves himſelf in the Guilt of another Man's Crimes too, and makes himſelf not only acceſſary, but even a Principal therein ; when he labours to bring Religion itſelf into Diſrepute, by opprobriouſly treating its beſt Profeſſors, and detracting from their Worth by abominable Forgeries ; Melancholy indeed is his State, and moſt deplorable his Proſpect. If every idle Word muſt be accounted for, what Account will he render of his Words, which have been not only unprofitable, but injurious and reproachful ?

SERM. reproachful? What shall be done unto thee

VII. O thou false Tongue? mighty and sharp  
Arrows shall be thy Portion with hot burning Coals.

What a dreadful and tremendous Thing will it be to be set at the left Hand among the Reprobates, and hear the Judge pronounce this irreverfible Sentence: *Depart ye cursed of my Father into Everlasting Fire; for these my Brethren were innocent, and you accused them; they were righteous, and you would have perverted them; they were dutiful and loyal, and you would have made them Rebels; they were redeemed from Wrath and made Children of Grace, and you would have made them the Children of Wrath again. And though these on my right Hand had Grace sufficient to overcome the Discouragements you laid in their Way, and with a stern Virtue to persevere to the End; yet others there are of your own Number of a weaker Faith, and more unstable Principle, who fell by your Means, and are now under the same Condemnation with you. What can a Man say in answer to so just a Charge? How will he then avoid,*



avoid, and yet how will he endure ever-  
lasting Burnings?

SERM.

VII.

THESE are very sad but necessary Reflections, and might be pursued a great deal farther; but if what has been already said has been well considered, I hope it will be sufficient. I shall therefore forbear at this Time, concluding (as I began) with the Words of St. Peter. 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18. *Ye therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these Things before, (he had been speaking of Christ's coming to Judgment,) beware lest ye also being led away with the Error of the wicked, fall from your own Stedfastness. (Or lest you make others fall from theirs.) But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory both now and for ever.*

Amen.



SERMON VIII.



# SERMON VIII.

*A Spittal Sermon at St. Bride's, on  
Wednesday in Easter-Week, 1707.*



GAL. vi. 2.

*Bear ye one another's Burdens, and  
so fulfil the Law of Christ.*

SERM.  
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T. Paul, toward the Close of the preceding Chapter, had been reckoning up the Fruits of the Spirit, and shewing what inward Disposition of Soul, and Regularity of outward Practice, the enlivening Grace of God would produce in those happy Christians, who had subjected the Flesh to the Spirit, had *crucified the former,*

mer, with its Affections and Lusts, and were wholly acted by a divine and heavenly Principle; That such Persons are exempted, not only from the Obligation of the Ceremonial, (from which Christ has set us all free) but from the Sting and Penalty of the Moral Law. For as it is elsewhere affirmed, that *where there is no Law there is no Transgression*, Rom. iv. 15. so it may be said, by way of Reverse, that where there is no Transgression, there is, in effect, no Law. *Against such*, says the Apostle, *there is no Law*, Gal. v. 23. i. e. there is none which condemns and disallows their Practices, none which they need be afraid of, who keep the Commandments, since it was only made for the *lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly, and for Sinners, for the unholy and profane, &c.* 1 Tim. i. 9. but not for the righteous Man, who is led by the Spirit of God, and brings forth the Fruits of it.

Now, as the greater Part of those blessed Fruits of that holy Spirit, which the Apostle enumerates, are such as relate to Love and Charity, and a Tenderneſs of Proceeding, with regard to our Christian Brethren; ſo, in the Beginning of this



SERM. Chapter, he sets himself, with a more

VIII.

peculiar Earnestness, to urge and excite Men to the Practice of this Duty ; exhorting all those who would make any Pretence to the Character of *spiritual* Men, *i. e.* of such as lived, and walked in the Spirit, and were acted by it, to pity and forgive the Frailties of their offending Brethren ; and, if any one among them was *overtaken with a Fault*, to *restore* such a one *in the Spirit of Meekness*, considering it might be their own Case, and that they also were subject to the like Temptations : And then subjoins, in the Words of the Text, *Bear ye one another's Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.*

FROM which Words, as they stand so connected, it may seem, that those *Burdens* of other Men, we are required to *bear*, are no other than their Sins and Provocations : that we should not insult over, and glory in their Miscarriages, nor magnify ourselves above them, by invidious Comparisons ; that we should not treat them as Enemies, but admonish them as Friends, endeavouring to mitigate and heal the

the Sore, rather than to exasperate, and make it wider. SERM. VIII.

BUT though this be the Thing principally intended, yet we may very well conclude, that this Precept of the Apostle is more extensive, and comprehends the whole Duty of Charity, in all its several Offices and Relations.

IF it were not so, he would not have stiled this Instance of our Obedience a *fulfilling the Law of Christ*: Which we are sure, from the whole Tenor of the Gospel, cannot be entirely fulfilled by a Passive Charity only.

IT is then only we fulfil that *Royal Law*, which requires us to *love our Neighbours as ourselves*, when we are ready to give, as well as to forgive; to relieve the Wants, as well as to pass by or cover the Failings of our Christian Brother; to afford him all that Comfort and Support in his Necessity, which we ourselves could reasonably wish or desire under the same Circumstances; and, in a Word, to help and assist him, to the utmost of our Ability, and bear a Part of the Burden he labours under, of whatever Sort it be.

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SERM. I shall therefore proceed to represent to

VIII. you,



*First*, What those Burdens are, which, as Men, we are all subject to, and wherein, as Fellow-christians, we are all obliged to be helpful to one another : And,

*Secondly*, How by so doing, we may be said to *fulfil the Law of Christ*.

*First* then, For those Burdens of other Men, which require and call for our Assistance ; the chief and heaviest of which are their Sins and Transgressions. This is indeed the most severe and afflicting Load that a poor Soul can groan under ; and good Reason had *David* to complain, when racked with the conscious Remembrance of his Guilt, that his *Iniquities were, like a sore Burden, too heavy for him to bear*. Our Sins are the worst Misfortunes that can befall us ; nor is there any one so deep plunged in Misery, no one is so very a Wretch, or so truly an Object of Compassion, as an insensible and obdurate Sinner.



Sinner. And the rescuing such a one from SERM.  
VIN.  
that *Load of Iniquity and Gall of Bitter-*  
*ness*, is the friendliest, the noblest, the most  
beneficial Instance of christian Charity.

BUT how can a Man (in this Sense) be  
said to bear the Burden of another? Can  
one Man expiate and atone for another's  
Crimes? Can he *redeem his Brother's Soul,*  
*or make an Agreement with God for him?*  
Can he, by charging himself with any  
Proportion of Guilt, render him less cri-  
minal, and take off from the insupportable  
Weight of his Iniquity?

No, This is an Office beyond the  
Reach of the most extensive Charity, and  
not to be undertook by any meer Man;  
who, be he never so upright, will have  
Faults enough of his own to answer for,  
and be far from needing any addition-  
al Blame, to heighten and inflame his  
Charge.

THE Obligation of Religion is personal,  
and not to be transferred from one to ano-  
ther; nor can there be any such Thing as  
a Communication either of Merit or De-  
merit between the Members of Christ's  
Church; we must all stand or fall by our

SERM. own Actions, and, as it follows a Verse  
 VIII. or two after my Text, *Every Man*, in this  
 Respect, *shall bear his own Burden.*

BUT, though we cannot bear the Offences, we may bear with the Offenders, We may pass by, with a christian Candor and Forbearance, their petty and pardonable Transgressions ; or, be they never so flagrant and enormous, never so heinously aggravated, we may yet endeavour to restore them in the Spirit of Meekness, and make them sensible of the Folly and Danger of their Sins : We may use such Methods for their Information, as may possess them with a true Sense of their Duty, which they never knew before, or had never well considered : And by Exhortations, by Counsels, by Entreaties, or, when they are irreclaimable by any gentler Ways, by Punishment and Coercion, so far as we have Authority to inflict it, we may (with the Blessing of God on our Endeavours) reduce them from their wild Extravagance to serious and sober Thinking, put a Stop to the Growth of their Impiety, and by converting them from the Er-  
 for

ror of their Ways, save their Souls from SERM.  
Death, and cover a Multitude of Sins. VIII.

THIS Charity to the Souls of Men, and labouring with an affectionate Concern to save them from eternal Ruin, has most of the Spirit of Christianity in it, and makes us, of all others, most nearly resemble the Pattern of our gracious Redeemer, whose whole Time here on Earth was spent in performing Offices of this Nature.

NAY indeed, the poor and indigent Condition in which he chose to appear in this World, left him no Room to be liberal in any other Way, unless when he was pleased to work a Miracle, to enable him to be so.

AND the same charitable Work may be performed by us, as it was by him, with no other Expence, than the Exercise of some Patience, and the Loss of a little Time, which can never be so usefully spent, never so profitably lost.

BUT even with respect to Giving and Receiving, we may be certainly assured, that whatever we bestow by way of Alms, will be so much the more acceptable, the



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SERM. more there is of this Principle in us, that  
 VIII. we design to honour God with our Sub-  
 stance; who is never so truly honoured by  
 it, as when it is employed in such a Man-  
 ner, and to such Uses, as may most effec-  
 tually promote the spiritual and eternal  
 Welfare of his Creatures.

I may be occasionally led, in the Sequel  
 of my Discourse, to say more on this Sub-  
 ject: But for the present I shall dismiss it,  
 without particularly applying what has  
 been said; only in the general, I hope and  
 believe, that most, or all of those chari-  
 table Foundations, which, by the Provi-  
 dence of God, and the Piety of good  
 Christians, have been erected in this City,  
 which so happily flourish under your Care  
 and Inspection, and which you are now  
 met to countenance and encourage, do, in  
 a large Degree, (besides the temporal and  
 political Good they tend to) contribute to  
 that great and desirable End, the making  
 Men wiser and better, and consequently  
 happier. That in those Places a great deal  
 of growing Vice and Immorality is timely  
 suppressed and kept under, and that incor-  
 rigible Dissoluteness of Manners, which no  
 Coun-

Counsel or Instruction can reform, is how-  
 ever with-held from the Means of Sinning,  
 though the Inclination still remains, and  
 the World is freed (for a Time at least)  
 from the Contagion of such foul Examples.

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 VIII.

I now proceed to represent to you, the  
*innocent Burdens* that Mankind is liable to  
 bear ; those Calamities and Disasters which  
 are the inseparable Attendants on frail Hu-  
 manity ; such as the Course of Providence  
 will oblige every Man, though never so  
 unwilling, to bear some Share of ; and the  
 Laws of Christianity should incline him  
 farther to take more than his own, and  
 with a willing Generosity to submit to  
 some Inconveniences, which were not im-  
 mediately and necessarily allotted him ;  
 wherein soever he perceives that he him-  
 self is remarkably favoured, and his Neigh-  
 bour heavily over-charged,

THERE is indeed such a numerous  
 Train of Ills, and great Variety of Mis-  
 fortunes, that beset us in this mortal State,  
 there are so many Torments and Anxieties,  
 such severe and trying Crosses and Perplex-  
 ities, which proceed from different Causes,  
 and affect us in different Parts, whilst yet  
 every

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SER M. every Man's own Calamity, so long as he  
 VIII. continues to smart under it, appears to him  
 the most intolerable of all others ; that it  
 would be an endless, as well as an un-  
 grateful Task, to open all the Scenes of  
 Misery, and set forth every particular Grievance, which the Sons and Daughters of Affliction complain of.

BUT, setting aside private and personal Cases, the Evils that are incident to human Nature, may be, as they commonly are, reduced to three Heads ; and I shall accordingly consider them, as they affect our outward State and Condition, our Body, or our Mind. And first, for those Evils which concern our outward State and Condition.

WE all feel ourselves to be clothed with frail and perishable Bodies, whose continual Waste and Decay of Spirits requires as constant Refreshments and Supplies ; and we as sensibly perceive, that even Food and Raiment, and so much as absolutely is necessary for our Support and Preservation, we receive not as the Gift of Nature. We come into the World naked and destitute, and abandoned to the Care of others,  
 before



before we are capable of taking any for our-  
selves. And when we are capable, we  
find ourselves obliged to eat our Bread in  
the Sweat of our Brows, and to provide  
for our Subsistence by our own Labour  
and Industry, unless another's Industry has  
before-hand made Provision for us, which  
it is not every one's Fortune to be born to.

WE see the great Dispenser of Blessings  
has thought fit to ordain it otherwise, and  
to distribute these worldly Comforts by  
very unequal Lots ; not but that he re-  
gards both Rich and Poor with the Eye of  
a common Parent, and resolves to make  
good, in due Time, that seeming Inequa-  
lity. In the mean Time, he gives them  
both an Opportunity of serving him, and  
conspiring, in their respective Circum-  
stances and Capacities, to glorify his Name,  
the only true End of living here below ;  
the one by a patient Submission under his  
Want and Penury, the other by a pious  
and charitable Use of his Abundance.

IT is for this End that God has made  
one Man to differ from another ; for this  
he has appointed some to stand in Need of  
Relief, and qualified others to afford it ;  
that

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VIII.

SERM. that each might exert the Virtues proper  
VIII. to the Sphere, wherein, by the Divine  
Appointment, he is placed. Whereas, if every one were made sufficient of himself, if no Man had Occasion for the Assistance of any other, did he contain within himself such an abundant Plenitude, such an unexhausted Spring of all worldly Comforts, as he was secure would never fail him, nor oblige him to seek for any Thing without himself; the brightest and most exalted Graces that now adorn our Minds, would then be wholly useless; the best and most convincing Demonstration we can give of our Love to Christ, (which we can never so livelily and acceptably demonstrate, as by extending our charitable Aid to the distressed Members of his Body) would then be of no Service to us, would be no Proof or Evidence of our Sincerity at all, whilst our Charity remained untried, whilst it lay dormant and buried in the Habit, thro' the Defect of suitable Objects on whom it might be actually exercised.

So that in Reality, a rich Man, if he considers to what End his Riches were given him, and is so disposed in his Heart,

as he ought to be, may as properly be  
said to need a poor Man to give to, as a  
poor one may to need the Assistance and  
friendly Contribution of the Rich. Nay, if  
Things were impartially and truly weighed,  
it would appear that his Acceptance of  
what is offered him, is, in its Effects and  
Consequences, by far the greater and more  
beneficial Charity of the two.

THERE is then, and it is very fit there  
should be, a remarkable Disproportion in  
the outward Allotments that befall us, to  
the Intent that God, who divideth to every  
Man severally as he will, may put us to an  
open Trial; that, on the one Hand, his  
Goodness may shine forth, and his Mercy  
triumph, in rewarding the Beneficence and  
pious Liberality of those who abound in  
Wealth, as well as the chearful Content-  
edness and Submission to his Pleasure, in  
such as suffer Need; or else, on the other  
Hand, his Justice may be magnified in  
the exemplary Punishment of those, who  
are miserably griping and hard-hearted in  
one Estate, or impatiently restless and que-  
rulous in the other.

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SERM. THE Beauty therefore of Providence is  
 VIII. so far from being eclipsed, the divine  
 Wisdom so little liable to Exception in this  
 particular, that all Men are not equally  
 rich and powerful; that, on the contrary,  
 without such Inequality, there would be  
 no Harmony at all in the Course of Things;  
 And we may discern the visible Marks of  
 God's infinite, unerring Prudence, in ma-  
 king us subservient to one another, as well  
 as to himself.

FOR as we should be strongly tempted  
 to withdraw our Allegiance from him, if  
 he had made us independent on himself;  
 as we should probably cease to worship  
 and invoke him, if we had nothing farther  
 to expect from him, if he had given us  
 our Portion at once, and made it securely  
 and irrevocably our own; so, had he  
 made us independent of one another, the  
 mutual Offices of Love and Friendship,  
 in the Performance whereof consists the  
 Excellence and Dignity of our Nature,  
 would be quite extinguished. In such a  
 State of Things, there could be no Givers,  
 because there would be no Receivers; the  
 merciful Man could have no Opportunity  
 of

of exerting his Bounty, and testifying his SERM.  
good Will to his Neighbour, when he, to VIII.  
whomsoever he would extend it, would  
be as amply provided as himself.

AND let any one consider what a comfortless State this Life must be, if Love and Mercy, Gratitude and Friendship, the sweetest of human Acts, and which affect us with the truest and most sensible Pleasure, should be entirely banished.

BUT this (as I have observed) is far from being the Case with us. As the World now stands, there is a large Scope for doing Good, and Objects of Commiseration more than enough to exhaust the largest Charity.

BUT sure they would be less numerous, and the Wealth of those who have this World's Good, beyond what will supply their reasonable Occasions, would be dispersed in a much more suitable Proportion to the Wants of the Indigent and Necessitous, if Men were truly and heartily convinced of the present Joy and Satisfaction that springs within the Soul of a merciful Man, when he has comforted and refreshed a miserable Object, as well as the glorious  
Reward

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SERMON. Reward with which his Charity will infal-  
 VII. libly be crowned hereafter.



OH! could the obdurate Miser, whose Heart and Soul are sunk into the Earth, and buried with his Money, who is obstinately deaf to all the Cries and Entreaties of the Distressed, who can behold a poor famishing Wretch with unrelenting Bowels; could he, I say, perceive but one Glympse of those bright and never fading Riches, which the charitable Person has treasured up in Heaven; how would he despise that sordid Dross, in which he now places the Sum of his Felicity! how earnestly would he contend for the true Riches, and provide him *Bags that wax not old!* what *Friends* would he make him with the *Mammon of Unrighteousness* here, that he might be received into an eternal Habitation, when this World, and all the Glory of it, shall pass away! how much more solid Complacency would he find, in succouring the Poor, and redeeming him from Misery and Ruin, than ever he did before in thriving by his Necessity, in grinding his Face, in oppressing and devouring him!

WE



WE are under a great Mistake (and that SERM  
Mistake is indeed the Source and Fountain VIII.  
of all our Uncharitableness) if we imagine  
that we are so far Masters of any Thing we  
possess, as to have no Account to render  
of it. From this false Notion of Property,  
we are too apt to look upon ourselves as  
discharged from all Obligations to do good,  
any farther than we are prompted to it  
by our natural Propensity or Inclination;  
and are ready to cry, with *Nabal*, Shall  
I take *my* Bread, and *my* Flesh, and give  
it — ?

BUT whatever the Dictates of Self-Love  
may suggest to us, the Gospel teaches us a very  
different Lesson, where we are assured, that  
these worldly Advantages are Talents com-  
mitted to our Trust by the Sovereign Lord  
of the Universe; that we are but the Stew-  
ards and Dispensers of it under him, who  
will one Day make a very strict Enquiry,  
how and to what Purposes we employed  
them. And our Saviour has warned us to  
prepare to answer at the great Day, on  
these Heads of Examination, What Hun-  
gry we fed, what Naked we cloathed, what  
other Objects of Compassion we relieved,

SERM. i. e. so far as our Means and Abilities ex-

VIII.

tended, after Allowance made for our own tolerable Support according to our Station. For, so far as this, there is something of Reason in what is commonly alledged of Charity's beginning with one's self; that a Man's own lawful and necessary Occasions are, in the first Place, to be considered. But Men must not suffer it to begin and end there too; nor must they judge every Thing necessary, and consequently appropriate it solely to themselves, which Avarice or Pride, which Luxury or Wantonness require.

HE that will postpone the doing any friendly Offices, till those unreasonable Humours are satisfied, will never begin to do Good; for those will never have done craving.

To straiten and pinch ourselves, only to give to one, who, we are sure, needs it less, is indeed such an Excess of Bounty, as is in no wise required of us. But when this is made a feigned Pretence, only to cover our own Uncharitableness; when we make very great Allowances for our own imaginary Wants, and very little for  
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the real ones of others; it is too plain a SERM.  
Sign, that we are not touched with that VIII.  
compassionate Feeling of the Straits and  
Sufferings of our Christian Brother, which  
our common Nature, and common Reli-  
gion, ought to excite in us.

BUT here some Person of real Tender-  
ness and Compassion, whose hearty Desire  
it is to be as beneficial as he can, may  
thus interpose.

*SINCE my Power of doing Good is not  
so extensive as my Will to do it, since my  
Faculties are narrow and confined, nor can  
my Assistance possibly reach to all that need  
it; since, when I have done my utmost, I  
must still be mortified with the afflicting  
Thought, that there are many unhappy  
Wretches yet left, for whose Ills I am able  
to provide no Remedy; but whilst, with the  
good Samaritan, I am binding up the Wounds  
of one unfortunate Man, it may possibly so  
happen, that another may fall among Thieves,  
or into some other Disaster, and have Occa-  
sion for that Relief, which I am unable to  
afford him, unless I withdraw it from the  
other. This then being the Posture of  
Things, amidst this Variety of compassionate  
S 2 Cases,*



SERM. Cases, how shall I be directed and deter-  
 VIII. mined? Where shall I cast my Mite, or how  
 shall I be assured of employing it to the best  
 Advantage?

BY what Rule shall I guide myself in  
 the Distribution of my Alms? Shall I act  
 in this Matter at random and by chance,  
 giving to all without Distinction, till the  
 Sum I had set apart is quite exhausted? Or  
 shall I take my Measures from the Merits  
 of the Object?

FOR Satisfaction in which Case, let it  
 be noted,

THAT although Charity, in Proportion  
 to one's Substance, is a necessary Duty;  
 yet, as to any determinate Sum, the Time  
 when, the Manner how, or the Persons  
 to whom it shall be dispensed, these are  
 Matters of Choice, and left to every one's  
 Discretion.

EVERY one therefore may extend his  
 Charity to such Objects as most affect him.  
 But it is to be hoped, that, for his own  
 Sake at least, he will take care to be be-  
 neficial in some way or other, and that he  
 will not make his Uncertainty where to  
 bestow his Alms, an Excuse for bestowing  
 none

none at all. Do all the Good thou can'st SERM.  
for thy own Part, and trust Providence for VIII.  
the rest which thou can'st not do.

It may likewise be reasonably expected, that every prudent Man will choose such Objects of his Bounty, where it is least in Danger of being misapplied, and where he has a tolerable Ground of Assurance, that it will conduce to some happy End. Though if it should happen otherwise, this would reflect no Dishonour on him who gave it with an honest Intent; nor would it be any Lessening of his Charity.

Good Will and Benevolence, Pity and Compassion, are a Debt we owe to all Mankind. All that partake of the same Nature with us, may lay Claim to these common Offices, though still a more peculiar Regard is to be had of those to whom we have nearer Engagements, and to whom we are united by closer Ties. But especially we should endeavour so to employ our Charity, as to make it most serviceable to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind.

SERM.

VIII.

AND this very naturally prompts me to recommend a particular Case of Charity, which confessedly falls within these Rules, and is free from the Suspicion of any sinister Practice in the Management : And that is, providing for the Education of poor Children (and especially of those who now attend this Solemnity) in the Fear of God and the Principles of Religion, and such a competent Degree of Learning, as may enable them to get an honest Livelihood, and render them useful and serviceable to their Country.

GREAT Numbers of Souls have by this Means been preserved from apparent Ruin, and many who would have been a Disgrace and Burden, have since become Ornaments to the Nation.

WE have great Reason to bless the divine Goodness, and to remember with Honour those pious Benefactors, who have hitherto promoted so useful a Charity, for the happy Effects it has already produced. And we might hope for much greater Advantages still, were the Revenue more answerable to the Greatness of the Charge, and the Worthiness of the Design ; which  
whether



whether it is or no, you will judge from **SERM.**  
the following Report. **VIII.**

*Here was read the true Report of the  
State of Christ's-Hospital.*

BEFORE I leave the Head I am upon,  
touching the Misfortunes that relate to our  
outward Condition, (on which I have en-  
larged the more, because it is the most ge-  
neral, and leaves me the less to say on the  
Cases which are yet behind, which for  
the most part admit of the same Relief)  
give me leave to lay before you two other  
Representations from the Hospital of *Bride-  
well*, and the *Workhouse*.

*A true Report of the State of Bridewell  
and London Workhouse.*

THESE are very fit and necessary Recep-  
tacles for such profligate and abandoned  
Wretches, as are lost to all Shame and  
Modesty, and past all Reproof, but that  
of the Scourge; as well as for those idle  
and unprofitable Vagrants, who are the  
Pest of your Doors, and Nuisance of your  
Streets, who, if you do not force them

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SERM. to maintain themselves by an unwilling Labour, will force you to maintain them without it, by an unwilling and extorted Charity.

BUT, *Secondly*, I come now to consider the Burdens we are obliged to bear for one another, which more immediately affect our Body. This earthly and mortal Part of us is made, as you all know and feel, of a very weak and frail Contexture, subject to be disordered by a thousand Accidents, to be racked and tortured by acute and violent Diseases, to waste with pining Sickness, and linger away an uneasy Life under an infirm and crazy Constitution. Every Part of us is exposed to Wounds, or some other Casualty, which may not only give us great Pain and Uneasiness for the present, but prove an Inlet, and open a Door to Death itself.

BUT here again it may be asked, as before, in the Case of Sins and Trespases, What is it that one Man can do for another in such Circumstances? Can I be sick and languish for my Neighbour, or will it be any Advantage to him if I am? Will my Sickness add to his Health, or my Weak-

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Weakness to his Strength? Can I mitigate his Pain, and ease him of his Smart, by taking it on myself, and suffering in his Stead? SERM. VIII.

No; our Experience tells us that this too is as impracticable as the other. A Man can no more consign over to another the Infirmities of his Body, than he can those of his Soul. Not all the Riches and Power of the greatest Monarch can purchase for him this Priviledge of transferring to any one besides, that bodily Pain and Weakness which is allotted for his own Share, and which he himself is bound to sustain in his proper Person.

THE Scripture tells us of a great and good King, who wished in vain that he could have died for another; and as vain would his Wish have been, had he desired that any other might die, or be sick, or undergo any other Misery, in his Place. For in this Sense too *every Man must bear his own Burden.*

BUT however, blessed be the Divine Goodness! We are not left so destitute, as not to be able to administer some Comfort to our afflicted Brother, when he languishes



SERM. *guishes on a sick Bed, or groans with the*  
 VIII *heavy Anguish of a maimed Limb or*  
*mangled Body. We may pity him at least,*  
*and even Pity is some Relief to the Mi-*  
*serable.*

BUT this is not all. For as the disastrous Accidents that may befall our Bodies are very numerous, so are the Remedies too, by which those Accidents may be repaired. There are salutary and healing Medicines, which with the Physician's Skill in applying, the Blessing of God co-operating, do often restore such lamentable Objects from a very hopeless, and almost desperate Condition.

THESE Remedies, this Help of the Physician's Art, the Great and Rich can procure for themselves, whenever it is their Lot to be visited with such Calamities, from which indeed they are no more exempted than the Poorest.

BUT when Poverty and Sickness meet together, what must become of such unhappy Wretches, if it were not for the Relief of charitable Christians, who by providing for them that Help, which they could not afford themselves, and defraying  
 ing

ing the Charge and Expences of their SERM.  
Cure, may, in a very good and commend- VIII  
able Sense, be said *to bear the Burdens of*   
*other Men?*

AND to shew you what a fair Opportunity may at any Time be had, of exercising your Charity in this way, let me now lay before you the State of the two Hospitals that are peculiarly appropriated to the Relief of such Objects of Compassion.

*Here was read the true Report of St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals.*

YOU see then how much Good has been done in this Kind, and how much more is still wanting. There is no one but must be convinced that this is a very useful and necessary Piece of Charity: Which, besides the Advantage it brings to the poor Sufferers, in healing their Wounds, many of which were received in the Defence of their Country, which gives them the juster Title to your Assistance; besides this, I say, it is a publick Benefit, that every one partakes of, to  
have

**SERM.** have such rueful and unsightly Spectacles  
**VIII** removed from common View. Were there  
 no such Places of Reception for the Maimed and Wounded, every Street would be an Hospital, and there must lie a *Lazarus* full of Sores at every rich Man's Door.

**BUT Thirdly,** We are not only liable to be thus heavily aggrieved, as has been shewn, in our outward Circumstances, and our bodily State, but our Mind also has its Grievances which want to be redressed. The greatest and worst of which is, the Reflexion of a guilty Conscience, for which there is no other Cure can be prescribed, but removing the Cause, and putting away our Guilt by a solemn and sincere Repentance, to which we should always be exhorting and admonishing one another.

**ANOTHER** great Evil relating to the Mind, which is the too common Parent of Vice and Immorality, of Debauchery and Profaneness, (though some have stiled it the Mother of Devotion) is gross Ignorance, and spiritual Blindness.

**IT** is a sad and deplorable Thing to see the Mind of Man, which is of heavenly

Original



Original and Extraction, and is capable of receiving such noble Impressions, lie wholly barren and unimproved, over-grown with a sordid Rust; and clouded with impenetrable Darknefs.

SUCH a wretched Debasement of human Nature every good Christian should take to heart, and endeavour, to the utmost of his Power, to prevent or rectify in others. But this falls in with what I have spoken on another Head, though it obliges me again to remind you of that Charity that is applied to the Education of Youth.

I shall mention but one Calamity more, which our better Part is subject to, and that is a very moving one, *viz.* Madnefs and Distraction.

How does it shock the Soul of a considerate Person, to see the Image of his Maker thus defaced? To see that boasted and celebrated Reason, that distinguishes Man from the inferior Part of the Creation, thus lost and intercepted, thus lamentably confused and disturbed in its Operations? To see the same Person now arguing rationally and calmly, and on a sudden, without any visible Cause for such an Alteration,

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SERM. teration, become wild and staring, fierce  
VIII. and unmanageable, or fantastically vain,  
forgetful of himself and of his Friends, and  
all that he seemed to know before, either  
hurting others by a mischievous, or expo-  
sing himself by a ridiculous Behaviour.  
These Persons sure are fit Objects of Com-  
passion, which I shall need no other Mo-  
tive to excite you to, than to read to you,

*The Report of Bethlehem Hospital.*

You see there is a large Field for you to  
be charitable and beneficent, and I trust in  
God you will all be so, in as ample Mea-  
sure as your respective Circumstances will  
admit, and in such Manner as you think  
most proper.

I should now proceed to that which I  
proposed as my second General Head;  
but (having already exceeded) I shall now  
only urge it as a short Enforcement of  
what has been already said. And it is  
this: That by being thus charitable, and  
bearing one another's Burdens, we are said  
to *fulfil the Law of Christ.*

LOVE

Love is indeed the fulfilling of the Law SERM.  
and the Gospel too. It is the *Bond of Per-* VIII.  
*fectness*, and the Consummation of all that  
is good in us.

HE that has this Principle fixed and rooted in him, will not fail (so long as he is under the immediate and actual Influence of it) in any Point of Duty toward his Neighbour ; he will not only refrain from any Invasion of his just Right, but be forward to lend him his Assistance, and to do him all friendly Offices ; because all such Abstinence from ill, and Readiness to do good, with the several Acts thence arising, are but subordinate Branches of that general and comprehensive Rule of *Loving our Neighbours as ourselves*. Love is the distinguishing Mark of Christianity, and that Badge by which our Lord would have his Disciples known. *Hereby*, says he, *shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another*. To say we are Followers of the *Holy Jesus*, and yet retain no Bowels of Compassion for our Brethren, is the greatest Absurdity that Words can express ; nor are there any Terms of Opposition so contradictory, so  
abso-



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SERM. absolutely incompatible, as *Uncharitable*

*VIII. Christian.* Love is the noblest Ornament  
of our Souls ; it outshines the other Graces that reside there, as the Apostle has assured us : It makes us most like God, and the blessed Author of our Religion. If we have not this, whatever other Excellencies we abound in, we are Nothing, of no Value or Consideration at all ; we are but as *sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal.*

THE liveliest Faith, the most vigorous Hope, the most ardent and inflamed Devotion, will stand us in no Stead, if they are not sanctified and perfected by that enlivening and vital Principle, in which the Life and Spirit of our Religion consists. For though Charity itself may cover a Multitude of Sins, yet no Excess of any other Virtue will cover the Defect of that. Whoever thou art therefore, who valuest thy self upon the highest Proficiency in such a Scheme of Godliness, as has hitherto been exclusive of Charity, though thy other Attainments may be very great, yet *lackest thou one Thing. Go thy Way, sell what thou hast, and give to the Poor,*  
*and*

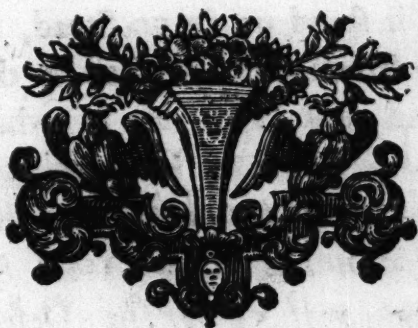
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*and so shalt thou have Treasure in Heaven.* SERM.

WHICH that we may all lay up, while **VIII.**  
we are here, and have the Fruition of it  
hereafter, God of his infinite Mercy grant.

*To whom, &c.*



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T

SERMON



# S E R M O N IX.

*A Spittal Sermon at St. Bride's, on  
Wednesday in Easter-Week, April  
16, 1718.*



JOB XXIX. 15, 16.

*I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet  
was I to the Lame. I was a  
Father to the Poor.*

SERM.  
IX.



WE have here an illustrious Pattern of Charity and Beneficence in the Person of righteous *Job*, who, though at the Time of his uttering these Words he was reduced to the most abject and helpless State of Misery; yet had once been acquainted with



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with happier Days, had known what it SERM.  
was to live in Affluence and Plenty, in IX.  
State and Dignity, invested with a very  
eminent, if not sovereign Authority : For  
so it should seem from some of the fore-  
going Verses, where he speaks of the  
*Princes refraining from talking, and the*  
*Nobles holding their Peace* before him.  
(*Ver. 9, 10.*) As also from the Words im-  
mediately preceding the Text, where he  
says, *My Judgment was as a Robe and as*  
*a Diadem.*

BUT in the Midst of his Extremity and  
Distress, he has the Comfort of reflecting,  
that in the more fortunate and flourishing  
Part of his Life, even then when he had  
every Thing at Command, and was free  
from all Apprehension of the unexpected  
Change of Fortune that afterwards befel  
him ; he was far from abusing the Gifts  
of his great Creator : That he had neither  
made his Abundance subservient to Riot  
and Excess, nor his Power to Injustice and  
Oppression ; but on the contrary, that  
when at the utmost Pitch of human Gran-  
deur, he still remembred he was a Man,  
and condescended to the common Offices

SERM. of Humanity : He looked down from the

IX. Heighth of all his Prosperity, with a melting Eye and compassionate Heart, on those who were broken with Misfortunes, and overwhelmed with Sorrow : He exerted his Strength and interposed his Might, not with an over-bearing Sway, to crush the Weak and Innocent, but to protect them from the Insults, and rescue them from the Violence of injurious Oppressors.

IN short, it appears by the several Acts of Beneficence enumerated in this and other Chapters of the History, by the frequent Appeals he makes to God, as to the Sincerity of his Professions, and by the Testimony God himself is pleased to bear to his Integrity, That he was not only strictly upright in his Dealings, a Man of Justice and Probity, that scorned to invade the Property of any other ; but that he was a common Friend and Benefactor, a Lover of Mankind, one that chearfully employed his Time, his Labour, and his Substance, in promoting the Welfare and Happiness of others.

WHICH truly great and amiable Character I shall make it my present Endeavour

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your to recommend to your Imitation, by SERM.  
a Diſplay of ſuch Inſtances of *Job's* Benevo- IX.  
lence as are contained in thoſe Words I  
have choſen to diſcourſe on, applying them  
ſtill as I go along to ſuch Branches of Pub-  
lick Charity committed to your Inſpection,  
as bear the neareſt Reſemblance to thoſe  
reſpective Acts, and that according to the  
Order in which they offer themſelves in  
my Text.

*Fiſt* then, Let us conſider that Profeſ-  
ſion of *Job*, that he was *Eyes to the Blind*.  
This is commonly underſtood of intellec-  
tual Blindneſs, of thoſe whoſe Minds are  
darkned; and the being *Eyes to them* muſt  
conſequently mean the enlightning thoſe  
dark Minds by the Beams of Knowledge  
and Inſtruction. But there is no Reaſon  
why this figurative Senſe of the Words  
ſhould exclude the literal one: As well  
thoſe who are deprived of the Organs of  
their bodily Sight, as thoſe whoſe Under-  
ſtandings are darkened, either through na-  
tural Impediments, or through the Defect  
of proper Means for their Improvement,  
are undoubtedly real Objects of Compaſ-  
ſion;



SERM. tion; nor can it be questioned but the  
 IX. diffusive Bounty of charitable *Job* extended itself to the Sufferers of either Sort, in such suitable Methods of Relief, as were adapted to their respective Cases.

THE Loss of *Eye-sight* is so touching a Calamity, so irksome and comfortless a State, as to raise Compassion in some Breasts not apt to be much affected by other Objects. When such a Disaster attends even the most Prosperous and Wealthy, it is a very fore Affliction, nor can the largest Exuberance of other worldly Blessings compensate for the Want of that common Blessing, Light. No Variety whatever of Meats to the Taste, or Sounds to the Ear, can afford an equal Entertainment to that beautiful Variety of Objects which adorns the visible Creation. The *Sun* may come forth as a *Bridegroom* from his Chamber, and rejoice as a *Giant* to run his Course; but the blind Man has not the Joy of beholding it. The Face of the Earth may be to others a Land of *Goshen*, but he lives in the midst of *Egyptian* Darkness. The Morning Dawn, or Meridian Brightness, are by him undistinguishable

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guishable from the Gloominess of Night: SERM.

He knows no Difference between them, IX.

but from the Information of others, unless perhaps he form an uncertain Guess, from the different Degrees of Noise, or the Depth of Silence. If ever there was a Time in Life, when his Organs were unimpaired, he may have an Idea indeed of Light and Colours from past Remembrance, and that may be some Entertainment to the Mind, may help his Conceptions, and quicken his Apprehension of Matters related to him. But if he brought that Defect into the World with him, and never had the Gift of Sight; the very Notion of what Light is, can no more enter into his Mind, than that it self can enter into his Eyes. Whatever he is able to conceive of it from the liveliest Description, is almost as wide from the real Nature of it, as confused, as inadequate, as our Speculations about heavenly Things, when we endeavour in this unglorified State to comprehend them fully, for which we are not as yet provided with suitable Faculties.

SERM. STUDIOUS and contemplative Men,  
 IX. when bereft of Sight, may find some Relief and Amusement under their Disability, from that Closeness of Thought and Undistractedness of Attention, in which they surpass other Men, whose Train of Meditation is often interrupted, and the Mind led astray by the wandering of the Eye.

THE Rich and Opulent, though to him also (as I before observed) it cannot be otherwise than a sore Affliction to be so disabled, yet has the Means in his Hands of making his State not inconsolable: He wants for no Conversation or Intelligence: He has those at Command, who in more Senses than one, are ready to be *Eyes to him*, either by reading to him at Home, or directing his Steps if he walks Abroad.

BUT alas, how shiftless and solitary is the Case of him, whose Blindness is accompanied with extreme Want, who is not attended by any friendly Comforter, who is reduced to the miserable Choice whether he will starve at Home, or beg Abroad, at the Hazard of his other Limbs, whilst, for want of human Assistance, he commits himself to the Guidance of a Brute Animal,



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Animal, and borrows *those* Eyes to supply  
his own Defect. SERM.  
IX.

I AM sorry this first Case I have been considering, should be so little pertinent as it is to the Occasion of your present Meeting. But since, I think, there is no peculiar Provision made, in any one of your Hospitals, for this *Species* of *Invalids*, I must be content for the present to leave it unapplied, but not without an Intention of briefly resuming it, before I finish my Discourse.

I PROCEED now to consider the same Clause of my Text: *I was Eyes to the Blind*, in the metaphorical Sense in which it is usually explained.

Now the rational Powers of a Man, which is the inward Eye-sight, may be blinded by *Sin*, by *Ignorance*, or by *Distraction*: And he who is instrumental in dispelling those Mists which cloud the Understanding, from which soever of these Causes they arise, may be said in a very laudable Sense to be *Eyes to the Blind*.

THE *Sinner* indeed may, and often does, believe himself possessed of an uncommon Degree of Understanding: So  
does

SERM. does the mad Man too, and is so much  
 IX. the madder for believing so. He thinks  
 he sees farther than other Men, and pities  
 the deluded Wretches who suffer themselves to be tied up to Rules, and laid under the unnecessary Restraints of Religion and Conscience : Whilst himself all the Time is under the greatest Delusion : His vicious Habits and depraved Appetites beget unaccountable Errors in his Judgment, and stifle the Suggestions of sober Reason. St. Peter in his Second Epistle, ch. 1. having recommended some moral Virtues, adds a little after, *He that lacketh these is blind, and cannot see afar off.* And by consequence, whosoever reclaims a Sinner, who does lack those virtuous Qualities, and reduces him to a right Sense of Duty and Obedience, does in effect restore Sight to the spiritually Blind.

ANOTHER Thing that darkens the Soul of Man, is *Ignorance*. In the raw and unexperienced Time of Life, the Mind has but few Images impressed upon it, and is very insufficient of itself to lay those few so well together, as to form any useful Rules of Conduct, or to judge what Methods

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thods are fittest to be pursued, or most con-  
ducive either to present or future Happiness  
and Security. It is easily misled by false  
Appearances, seduced into Snares and Dan-  
gers, impatient in its Desires, weak in its  
Choice, and frail in its Resolves. The  
ignorant and uninstructed even in Tempo-  
ral Concerns are liable to fall into very  
great Miscarriages : Some Method of Pro-  
ceeding, some Rules of Caution, some  
Lessons of Oeconomy, are absolutely ne-  
cessary toward discharging even the Busi-  
ness of common Life : And if no such  
Precepts were to be learnt by Communi-  
cation from others, if every one were to  
remain in his primitive Ignorance, till he  
could form a sure Judgment of what was  
most expedient, from his own Practice and  
Experience ; his Wisdom would come too  
late in Life, and his Affairs be irretrieva-  
bly ruined, before he arrived at the Skill  
to manage them.

BUT how much more do we want the  
Information of others, in order to the At-  
tainment of spiritual Knowledge ! For as a  
wise Man observes, *Hardly do we guess at  
Things that are upon Earth, and with La-  
bour*

SERM.  
IX.



SERM. *how do we find the Things that are before*  
 IX. *us; but the Things that are in Heaven who*  
*hath searched out? Wisd. 9. 16.*

SOME imperfect Ideas of a superior Power, some Notions of moral Rectitude and Depravity, some Apprehensions of a future Recompense, the Light of natural Reason might suggest, without the Help of any Monitor. But in how much Confusion and Perplexity are such Notions involved! In what a Labyrinth of Error must that miserable Wretch be forced to wander, who follows so blind a Guide! What a Stranger must he be to the Privileges of the Gospel, and the Terms of Salvation, without some one to direct him, and unfold the Mystery of his Redemption to him! And how many such miserable Wretches are there, even in the midst of this Christian Country, who, for want of proper Means of Instruction, are insensible of the Covenant they have made with God, and pass their Lives without any Reflexion on their own Duty, or any Expectation of the Divine Promises! How friendly, how charitable an Office is it, how decently expressive of that deep Sense  
 of

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of Gratitude, wherewith we are, or ought SERM.  
to be affected, when we contemplate the IX.  
Blessings of our own Redemption, to be  
the Instruments of enlightening such poor  
Souls, by instilling, or causing to be in-  
stilled into them, the Principles of saving  
Knowledge, and guiding their Feet into  
the Way of everlasting Peace !

BUT besides *Sin* and *Ignorance*, there is  
a *third* Sort of *Blindness* incident to hu-  
man Minds, and that is *Distraction*, which  
divests the rational Soul of all its noble  
and distinguishing Endowments, and sinks  
unhappy Man below the mute and sense-  
less Part of the Creation : Even *brutal*  
*Instinct* being a surer and safer Guide than  
*disturbed Reason*, and every tame Species  
of Animals more sociable and less hurtful  
than *Humanity* thus *unmanned*. Sad Ble-  
mish of our Nature ! most mortifying Re-  
flexion to consider, that our boasted Rea-  
son is not given us by any certain Tenure  
for the Term of our natural Lives, but  
that something with a human Shape and  
Voice may for many Years survive all that  
was human besides ! Frail Man indeed !  
So liable to be degraded by the Loss of  
that

SERM. that very Faculty, for which he values him-

IX. self so highly, and he who values himself most highly upon it, in the greatest Danger of being so degraded. Persons of the greatest Genius, of the finest Parts, and most lively Imagination, whose Brain is of a more delicate and subtle Texture than that of other Men; are observed in many of their Flights to border very nearly upon *Frenzy*, and too often they do more than border. Whilst the aspiring Soul is pursuing some lofty and elevated Conception, soaring to an uncommon Pitch, and teeming with some grand Discovery; the Ferment proves too strong for the feeble Brain to support, the Intenfeness of Thought disconcerts the slender Fibres; the thin Partitions and Inclosures, that keep the Ideas separate, and ranged in a beautiful Order, are burst in sunder by the Force of the labouring Imagination, and the whole Magazine of Notions and Images lye jumbled together in a common Heap, and mingled in wild Confusion.

WHEN once the Mind has received such a total Crush, no Operation can afterwards be expected from it, that is regular,



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gular, uniform, and even; every Thing SERM.  
will be done by Fits and Catches, and al- IX.  
most each Minute will shew it in all the  
Diversity of Passions; unless in such Cases  
where the Breach was made by the Excess  
of some one predominant Passion. The *Gay*  
and *Merry*, the *Doleful* and *Complaining*,  
the *Fond* and *Loving*, the *Angry* and *Re-*  
*vengeful*, the *Silent* and *Sullen* Humour;  
succeed one another by sudden Starts, with-  
out any Occasion administred, without  
any Object to excite them.

SOMETIMES a short Interval of Reason  
begins to dawn, but is lost and intercept-  
ed again, by some odd Caprice that comes  
cross the Imagination, before any rational  
Conclusion can be formed, or any con-  
sistent Purpose of Mind be uttered. So  
that the Discourse which began with a  
seeming Earnestness, and raised an Expec-  
tation of something not only serious and  
coherent, but of great Importance; expa-  
tiates into idle Rambling, and goes off in  
*unintelligible Jargon*. The sober and so-  
lemn Look into which the Visage had  
composed itself, the Air and Deportment  
of a most reserved Gravity, breaks out in  
an

SERM. an Instant into loud unseasonable Laughter,

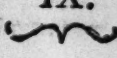
IX. into apish Gestures, and antick Mimickry.

No Sense of Honour or Decency then remains, no Regard is paid to the Number or Character of the Beholders. The Restraints of *Fear* and *Shame* are quite laid aside, and stubborn Self-Will and brutal Concupiscence discover themselves without any Check or Guard.

IN some Cases indeed the Discomposure of Mind is not quite so shocking, nor the Concussion so violent, but that the shattered Ideas may recollect themselves again, the Delusion may cease, and the Mind recover its former Justness and Regularity of Thought. But in order to this, there is need of Art and Skill, of proper Remedies, and a strict Confinement of the Person so afflicted. And happy is it when all the Care and Skill that can be applied, proves effectual, through the Blessing of God, to the retrieving any Person from so lost and hopeless a Condition.

IT is Time now to consider how far those *charitable Foundations*, for the Encouragement of which you are here assembled, may be said to contribute to that  
laudable

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laudable and beneficial Purpose, the being SERM.  
*Eyes to the spiritually blind.* As for that IX.  
Sort of *Blindness* which proceeds from   
Vice, besides the preventive Remedy of a  
virtuous Education, (of which more will  
be said under another Article) you have  
likewise wholesome Methods of Cure, if  
the Evil be not past Cure; or if so, yet  
at least you have the Means of making  
those who are incorrigible themselves, a  
Warning and Terrour to others. You  
have \* *proper Receptacles* for the Idle and  
Vagrant, the Loose and Dissolute, where  
they are kept under close Durance, and  
by the Sense of bodily Smart, (the only  
Sense which too many of them are not  
already past, before they are brought thi-  
ther) are compelled to harder Labour, than  
that honest Labour of their Calling which  
they relinquish, to addict themselves to a  
slothful and vitious Course of living. It is  
to be hoped that some of these licentious  
Vagabonds (though I fear not many) some  
who are not yet thoroughly hardened in  
their Iniquity, are restrained by a Remem-

\* *Bridewell and London Work-House.*

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U

brance



SERM. brance of the Pain and Shame they have  
 IX. undergone, from repeating the same Cour-  
 ses, lest they be brought again to the like  
 Correction, if not from a better Principle.  
 But whatever Effect such Chastisements  
 may have upon themselves, at least it does  
 good to others, and our Streets are freed  
 during the Time of their Confinement,  
 from a great Part of that Annoyance which  
 most infests them.

As a Preservative against that *Blind-  
 ness* which proceeds from *Ignorance*, two  
 or three of these Foundations (\* *one* of  
 them altogether, and † *others* in Part) are  
 Nurseries of *Poor Children*, where great  
 Numbers of them are instructed in Chri-  
 stian Knowledge, and taught how to dis-  
 charge the Duties they owe to God, their  
 Neighbour, and themselves. They are  
 told the Danger of breaking God's Com-  
 mandments, and the Advantage of observ-  
 ing them: They are taught what to pursue,  
 and what to avoid, how to live piously  
 and virtuously here, in order to be ever-  
 lastingly happy hereafter. This Educa-

\* *Christ's Hospital.* † *Bridewell, and the Work-  
 House.*

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tion is generously given to some on whom SERM.  
the Poverty or Stupidity of miserable Pa- IX.  
rents could not have bestowed the same  
Care ; to some on whom the Negligence  
of ill ones would not ; but especially  
to those who have no Parents at all, to  
make such Provision for them.

*Lastly*, IN Commiseration of those un-  
happy People, who are bereft of the dear-  
est Light, the *Light of Reason*, who are  
transported out of their Senses by the im-  
petuous Hurry of a *Lunacy* or *Frenzy*,  
who have lost all Remembrance of, or at  
least all Regard for themselves, their Af-  
fairs, their Friends, and what-ever they  
used to take Delight in ; who are not only  
unqualified to bear their Share in rational  
Conversation, but become even dangerous  
to be conversed with ; in Pity, I say, to  
their deplorable Case, you have a large  
\* *Place of Reception* appropriated to such  
Patients, where proper Care is taken that  
they shall neither harm themselves nor  
others, and where, by the Help of such

\* Bethlehem.

U 2

Phy-

SERM. Physick and Diet, and other Management,

IX. as the Nature and Degree of each Person's Distemper calls for ; many of those distracted People are, through God's Providence, and such charitable Endeavours, recovered from that inconsistent Raving and Wildness of Imagination, and restored to a sound and perfect Mind.

I have been the longer in treating of this first Instance of Charity mentioned in my Text, *the being Eyes to the Blind*, as it was capable of being considered in different Views, and under some one or more of those Views, was applicable to the greater Part of those *pious Incorporations* over which you preside as *Governors*. I must be more brief in what remains.

*Secondly*, Therefore holy *Job* thus professes for himself, in the next Article ; *Feet was I to the Lamé*. Soundness of Body, and a hale Constitution, with all the Limbs entire, and capable of exerting their respective Functions, is all the Inheritance the great Number of Mankind is born to, besides their common Title to the Protection of Divine Providence. And a good Inheritance it is, to those whose Birth



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Birth and Parentage entitles them to no SERM.  
higher Prospects, and where it can be IX.  
no Discouragement or Disappointment to  
them, to make no better an Appearance  
than their Ancestors have made before  
them ; unless in the Case of such of them  
as apply themselves to Business with un-  
common Industry. It is not every one's  
Lot to have all the Conveniencies of Life  
provided for him by the Care of others,  
and to succeed to a Patrimony already ac-  
quired, without any Toil of his : Nor  
has the great Dispenser of Blessings thought  
fit to distribute the good Things of this  
Life into such even and equal Portions.  
The far greater Part of Men are obliged to  
*eat their Bread in the Sweat of their*  
*Brow*, if they will eat it at all. And if  
they have bodily Strength sufficient to en-  
able them to get an honest Livelihood by  
the Work of their Hands, their Case is  
not unhappy ; but they may experience  
more Joy and Comfort in that humble  
Station, if attended with a contented  
Mind and good Conscience, than the rio-  
tous rich Man in the Midst of his ungodly  
Plenty.

292 *A Spittal Sermon at St. Bride's,*

SERM. BUT hard indeed is their Lot, and very

IX.  severe the Dispensation under which they are fallen, who have neither Bread to eat, nor Hands wherewith to work for it : who are sorely maimed and crippled in their Limbs, racked with tormenting Pains, or wasted with lingring Diseases. The Body thus afflicted is not in a fit State to be harrafs'd and fatigued, in order to its own Support ; but feels more Decay from hard Labour, if undertaken, than Relief and Sustenance from the Fruits of that Labour. Many are the Accidents in Life, by which the healthiest Constitution is liable to be broken, and the strongest Body to be disabled, and sometimes in a very ghastly and lamentable Manner. I will not offend you by drawing into View such a shocking and uncomfortable Scene, and forbear any Description of those rueful Objects of Misery, the very Relation of whose Sufferings would be as grating to the Ear, as the Sight of such dismal Spectacles is offensive to the Eye. But may such Forbearance prove no Detriment to those miserable Creatures, nor divert the intended Bounty of any generous Benefactor

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factor from being applied to their Re-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
lief ; who, I trust, will consider them as IX.  
so much the more distressed, by how  
much the more loathsome they are, and  
reflect with himself how dreadful it must  
be to groan under the Anguish of those  
Wounds, which it is a Pain to others to  
see or hear of.

It is well so many of them are removed from being a publick Nuisance, by the Entertainment they find in the *Two \* capacious Hospitals* erected and endowed for that Purpose, and it is a great Pity they are not all so. Many unhappy Impressions made on tender Minds, by the sudden Encounter of such startling Objects, would be prevented ; and so far the taking care of them is a common Benefit, of which every one partakes. But much more real and sensible is the Benefit, accruing to the poor Patients themselves, who are received into such hospitable Shelter, where every Thing in the Power of human Skill is attempted for their Relief, and where several Thousands of them are

\* *St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals.*



294 *A Spittal Sermon at St. Bride's,*  
SERM. yearly recovered from very grievous Infirmities and dangerous Maladies, and restored to a Capacity of providing for themselves, by returning to the Business of their lawful Occupations. Whoever is a Contributor toward obtaining for the Sick and Impotent such seasonable Assistance, may very properly be said to be *Feet to the Lamé.*

*Thirdly,* Another Method of doing good, Specified in the Text, in which the Charity of *Job* exerted itself, was the being a *Father to the Poor.* That righteous Person, in the Days of his former Prosperity, which he is now calling to Remembrance, as on the one Hand he enjoyed a great Abundance of Wealth, so on the other, had he a numerous Off-spring of his own, who all expected their Portion of that Wealth. Such Family Engagements might have furnished an Excuse to one of a selfish and narrow Spirit, for with-holding his Charity from Strangers, and he might have urged, when solicited to succour the Distressed, that he had those of his own Household, for whom, by the Laws of God,

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God, and Ties of Nature, he was bound SERM.  
to make Provision. But he had too en- IX.  
larged and generous a Soul to let his Boun-  
ty flow in so confined a Channel. He  
had more Trust and Confidence in God's  
Providence, than to apprehend his Fami-  
ly would ever feel the Want of what he  
bestowed in Acts of Mercy. And accor-  
dingly, as large as his Progeny was by Na-  
ture, he made it much larger by Adop-  
tion. He became the common Parent of  
such as were left without any, or which  
is next to none, who had only such  
helpless ones as could not, or such un-  
natural ones as would not provide for  
them.

A very noble Pattern for Imitation, and  
a just Reproach to such hard-hearted Chri-  
stians, as in the Midst of the greatest Af-  
fluence, plead the Care of their Families,  
in Bar of charitable Deeds ! Happy is it  
for desolate Infants, that all Men do not  
act on such churlish Principles ; that Mul-  
titudes of good Christians are found, who  
extend a paternal Care beyond the Bounds  
of their private Families ; who by a vo-  
luntary Choice make themselves *Fathers*

*to*

296 *A Spittal Sermon at St. Bride's,*

SERM. to the Fatherless, and take the Needy un-

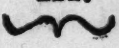
IX.  der their Protection; that new Benefactors still arise who make farther Additions to the standing Revenues of \* *that Hospital*, where so many Hundreds of poor Orphans enjoy the Benefit not only of Food and Raiment, but of good Nurture and Instruction: From whence they are sent Abroad with previous Qualifications for being made serviceable to their Country in diverse beneficial Ways, a Regard being had to the Genius and Capacity of each; and in a fair Probability of gaining a competent Livelihood at least, if not of thriving beyond their Neighbours, and arriving at an extraordinary Degree of Wealth, by observing the Rules of Sobriety and Frugality, and by an industrious Affiduity in their several Employments. This has been the Case of many of them, and some have returned a grateful Tribute, have repaid the Charges of their Maintenance and Education with large Encrease, and have proved Benefactors themselves, where they were once the Objects of

\* *Christ's Hospital.*

Bounty.



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Bounty. Such gracious Methods has the SERM.  
Divine Goodness of turning Crosses into IX.  
Blessings, and Afflictions into Joy and   
Happiness. It was once esteemed the  
great Calamity of those poor Children to  
be deprived of their Parents; but by be-  
ing adopted into the Number of those for  
whom such Care is taken, not a few of  
them become Gainers by their Loss, meet  
with *many Fathers* instead of *one*, and are  
put into a fairer Way of providing both  
for their present and future Welfare, than  
possibly might have been their Lot, if  
their natural Parents were still alive.

GIVE me leave now to read to you the  
Report of the several *Hospitals*, and after  
that to conclude with some Observations  
on that which appears to be the State of  
them.

HERE was read a true Report of the  
great Number of poor Children, and other  
poor People, maintained in the several *Hos-  
pitals*, &c.

THUS

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SERM. THUS you see in what a plentiful

IX. Stream the Charity of those who have gone  
 before you has flowed; you have the Satisfaction of beholding the original Endowments of the first Founders, together with such farther Donations and Bequests as the Charity of succeeding Christians has from Time to Time been adding to them, directed to the appointed Use. But while we praise God for raising up such Friends to the Poor, and bless the Memory of such pious Benefactors for having done so much, it is a great Allay to such pleasing Reflections, to consider how much more is still wanting: And the Case of many miserable Wretches is sorely to be lamented, who can find no Place in these friendly Receptacles, capacious as they are. It cannot be said of these Hospitals, as of the Feast in the Gospel, to which *the Poor, the Halt, the Maimed and the Blind* were invited, that when all who could be found in the *Highways, or Streets, or Hedges*, were called in, there was yet *Room* to spare: Nor does the united Liberality of so many Ages run like the Widow's Oil in

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in so profuse a Current, till there are no SERM.  
more Vessels to receive it. Little Occa- IX.  
sion is there here of *compelling them to*  
*come in*, except to the Houses of Correc-  
tion; many Halt and Maimed there are,  
against whom even those hospitable Gates  
are forced to be shut: Many empty Ves-  
sels whom there is no Oil to fill.

SINCE then there is so large a Field for  
doing farther Good, since after all the Pro-  
vision that has been made, there is still a  
great Multitude of languishing Wretches  
left unprovided for; I will not distrust  
but that every compassionate Person of Sub-  
stance and Ability, will feel himself touch-  
ed with a Sense of their Misery, and con-  
tribute in such Proportion and such Man-  
ner as he shall judge proper, to the far-  
ther Endowment of some one of these  
Hospitals, that their Revenues may be  
more answerable, than they appear to be,  
to the pressing Demands which are daily  
made upon them. This is the common  
Case of every one of them, that they are  
called upon for more Help, than in their  
present Situation they are able to afford;  
and



SERM. and whoever is disposed to lend a helping  
IX. Hand to any one of them, may be assured  
of meeting with fit Receivers of his  
Bounty.

THE earnest Application that is constantly made for fresh Objects to be admitted, justifies one Piece of Oeconomy, in the Management of those Places, nay indeed makes such a Regulation absolutely necessary, though it has the Appearance of great Hardship; and that is, the turning out those already admitted, when once they are pronounced *incurable*. Were the Practice otherwise, the Charity would be less extensive, and instead of circulating yearly through many Thousands, who are actually relieved, it would be wholly engrossed by one unhappy Set of People, on whom all Remedies are lost; and they would stand in the Way of others, to whom those Remedies might be applied with far better Success.

IN the mean Time, sadly to be deplored is their Case, who remain under such a Sentence. Then to be excluded Relief when their Misery is at the Height! To  
have

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have no other Prospect before them but a SERM.  
Continuation of Pain and Torment, as IX.  
long as Life itself shall endure ! But thus  
it is, and must be, till it shall please God  
to put it into the Hearts of some great  
and generous Souls, to erect in this Land,  
what some other Christian Countries are  
blest with, and what is much wanted here ;  
AN HOSPITAL FOR THE INCURABLE.  
There the comfortless Blind might rest in  
Peace and Security, and meet with neces-  
sary Subsistence, without wandring in the  
Dark to seek it. There the distracted  
Lunatick, whose Senses are gone past Re-  
trieve, might be immured with Safety,  
and restrained either from doing any Act  
of Violence, or exposing the lamentable  
Defect of human Nature, when there are  
no Remains of Reason to conduct it. There  
the disabled of all Sorts might wear away  
the lingring Remnant of their Lives, tho'  
without Hope of Cure, yet with all the  
Comfort and Support their calamitous E-  
state will bear. But whether in this, or  
any other Way, it is the Duty of Chri-  
stians to be helpful to one another, and  
they

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SERM. they who are Strong are required to bear

IX. *the Infirmities of the Weak.*



NOW to God the Father, God the Son,  
and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all  
Honour, &c.



SERMON X.





## SERMON X.

A Spittal Sermon at St. *Bride's*, on  
*Tuesday* in *Easter-Week*, 1731.



2 TIM. iii. 2. Former Part.

*For Men shall be Lovers of their  
own selves.—*



AD the Words I have now SERM.  
read to you, been delivered in X.  
the Way of Precept or Instruc-  
tion ; as a Rule of Life and  
Manners to be observed : Had the Apo-  
stle, when he said, *Men shall be Lovers of  
their own selves*, intended to recommend  
Self-Love as a necessary Christian Quali-  
fication, and to inculcate it as a Gospel  
VOL. III, X Duty ;

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SERM. Duty ; I should have made Choice of a very  
X. improper Text, and most unsuitable to  
the Subject on which I am now to treat.

BUT neither is so morose and churlish  
a Temper of Mind, or a Behaviour suitable  
to it, any where recommended in  
Holy Scripture ; at least not without great  
Limitations and Restrictions : Much less  
can any such Doctrine be inferred from  
the Passage now before us, which, it is  
evident from the Context, is not to be  
understood in a Mandatory or Directive,  
but in a Prophetick or Premonitory Sense ;  
not as prescribing what ought to be done,  
but preparing us, by an antecedent Warning,  
for what, in Fact, would come to pass,  
in Defiance of the plainest and clearest  
Directions to the contrary.

FOR mark how St. Paul introduces it,  
*Know this also, says he, that in the last  
Days perilous Times shall come. For Men  
shall be Lovers of their own selves ; covetous,  
Boasters, proud, Blasphemers, disobedient to Parents,  
unthankful, unholy ; without natural Affection,  
Truce-breakers, false Accusers, incontinent, fierce,  
Despisers of those that are good ; Traytors, heady, high-  
minded,*

*minded, Lovers of Pleasures more than* SERM.  
*Lovers of God.* X.

HERE you see how far Self-Love is from being proposed to our Practice, as commendable and praise-worthy; when you find it standing in the Front of a black and dismal Catalogue of the most odious and abhorred Qualities; and those are justly represented as *perilous Times*, when such enormous and malignant Affections should generally prevail.

I have no Design to cast an Asperſion on the Days in which we live, or to insinuate that those *perilous Times* are now actually come, from the little Regard great Numbers of Men are seen and known to shew to any thing but themselves; for however obvious it may be to every one's Observation, that too many such there are, whose whole Turn of Mind is bent upon nothing else, but how to enrich and aggrandize themselves, without caring by what Methods, at whose Cost or Disadvantage, or whom they trample under, so they can but rise upon their Ruins: Whatever Instances may be produced of gross and notorious Corruption, of Persons so



SERM. abandoned to filthy Lucre, as, for the

X.

Sake of some private and personal Emolument, to prostitute their Consciences, betray their Trust, forfeit their Honour, and debase their Character ; yet on the other Hand, it cannot but be acknowledged, that such a Conduct is far from being new ; that there always have been, and it is to be feared, always will be such self-seeking and narrow-spirited Men ; and, though, upon a Comparison between these and former Times, it should appear, that the Number of them is greatly increased, that Men grasp at private Advantages, in Preference to the publick Good, more shamelessly and avowedly than heretofore ; yet perhaps there may be found, in Allay to this, so many generous and disinterested Spirits, who scorn all little and mercenary Views ; who rather chuse to live in Meanness and Obscurity, than advance themselves to an unnatural Height of Wealth and Grandeur, on base and dishonest Terms ; who never received the Wages of Iniquity, nor took of the *accursed Thing* : It is possible, I say, there may be so many of this Sort among us, as

may

may over-balance and make some Atone-  
ment for the ungenerous Craft and con-  
tracted Schemes of the Selfish and De-  
signing.

SERM.  
X.

It is plain at least from the daily In-  
crease of Revenues which is added to your  
Hospitals, and the liberal Promotion of  
other pious and charitable Works, that  
however *the Love of many may have waxed*  
*cold*, there is a Warmth and Fervour still  
alive in many other Breasts, which excites  
them to do worthy and beneficial Acts,  
and lay themselves out in *the Labour of*  
*Love*.

THAT I may contribute, if possible, to  
the making Men less tenacious, and more  
communicative, I shall make it my pre-  
sent Business to set the two Characters in  
an opposite Light, and to shew,

*First*, THE Odiousness of Self-Love,  
And,

*Secondly*, THE Amiability of a gene-  
rous and publick Spirit.

SERM. THERE is indeed a Kind or Degree of

X. Self-Love, which is not only innocent, but necessary. The Laws of Nature strongly incline every Man to be solicitous for his own Welfare, to guard his Person, by a due Precaution, from Hurts and Accidents; not to expose it to needless Hazards; to provide Food and Raiment, and all Things needful for his bodily Sustainance, by honest Industry and Labour, if it is not his Lot to be born to an Inheritance ready acquired for him by the Care and Industry of others; or which, in the Course of providential Events, may happen to befall him: To repair, as far as he is able, such Decays as may attend his bodily Constitution, by proper Helps, and the best Means that are afforded him, and much more to make it his grand Concern to secure the everlasting Happiness of his immortal Part.

SUCH a Self-Love as this, goes little farther than Self-Preservation, without which Principle implanted in us, the human Species would be soon lost and extinguished, and the Work of our great Creator be defeated, if every Individual were not both  
allowed,



allowed, and also encouraged and excited, SERM.  
in a laudable and justifiable Sense, to take X.  
Care of one. ~

BUT that which St. *Paul* speaks of with Abhorrence, is Love merely selfish, that both begins and terminates in a Man's single Person, exclusive of all tender Regards for any one else: When every Thought, and Wish, and Action, much more every Endeavour that is attended with Trouble and Expence, is looked upon as mis-employed and cast away, of which any other besides himself is to reap any Part of the Advantage: This is, in the worst and most criminal Sense, taking Care of one only.

HE who stands upon such Terms with the World, and is, by long and confirmed Experience, known to do so, is a Sort of Apostate from human Society, and deserts that Station in Life, wherein the Divine Providence had placed him: He sets a dangerous Precedent, if all Men were so ungracious as to be led by his Example, of dissolving those Bands and Ligaments by which all Communities are held together, and rendring Mankind as unfociable

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SERM. Creatures as the Savages which inhabit

X. the Desert. The Foundation on which Society is built, is the Occasion one Man has for the Assistance of another, and the Impossibility of subsisting in Peace and Security, without mutual Succour, and an interchangeable Discharge of good and friendly Offices.

IF we will but look into our own Nature, and reflect on the End and Design of our Creation, the Reach and Extent of our Faculties, our Subordination to one another, and the Insufficiency of every Man, as he stands by himself alone; we shall soon be convinced, that doing Good, and affording each other reciprocal Assistance, is that for which we were formed and fashioned; that we are linked together by our common Wants, as well as by Inclination, and that Tendernefs of Disposition, and natural Sympathy, that is implanted in us.

THAT we are born and educated, that we enjoy either Necessaries or Comforts, that we are preserved from Perils in our greener, or ever arrive at riper Years, next under the Watchfulness and Protection of Almighty

Almighty God, is owing to the Care of SERM.  
 others: And can any thing be more just X.  
 and reasonable, than that we too, in our  
 Turn, should give that Succour we have  
 received, and *do*, not only as *we* willingly  
*would*, but as we actually *have been done*  
*unto*?

THERE is a certain Proportion of Trou-  
 ble and Uneasiness, as well as of Pleasure  
 and Satisfaction, that must of Necessity be  
 born by the Race of Men; insomuch that  
 he, who will not sustain some Share of  
 the former, is unworthy to partake of any  
 of the Comforts of the latter: He does  
 not act a fair Part on the Stage of Life,  
 but deserves to be excluded the Benefits of  
 Society, and left to converse and entertain  
 himself with the only Person in the World,  
 for whom he has the least Concern, and  
 to whom he is willing to do any Act of  
 Kindness, and that is, his solitary Self.

BUT here the Selfling will interpose,  
 and say; It is true, I have Occasion for  
 the Help of others, and the Help of others  
 I have: I have Occasion for the Attend-  
 ance of Servants, and by Servants I am  
 attended: I want to be supplied with those  
 Con-



SERM. Conveniences of Life, which Artificers

X. provide in their respective Occupations, and

I am supplied accordingly: So long as I am furnished with sufficient Store to pay them an Equivalent, I am in no Danger of being left destitute of any Thing that Money can procure. This is the Commerce I carry on in the World, thus I approve myself a social Member of the Commonwealth. But what have I to do, in parting with my Substance to them, who can give nothing to me in Return? Let those, who are apprehensive of future Want, hasten it upon themselves, if they please, by divesting themselves of what is real and in actual Possession, with the Hope of having it returned to them, in the Time of their Distress: But when that Time of Distress is come, where will they find their Pay-Master? For my part, I love to deal in more substantial Securities, and am willing to run all Hazards of being denied Relief myself, when I cannot purchase it.

To such ungodly Reasoning does the inordinate Love of *Mammon* seduce the hard-hearted and worldly minded Man; so forgetful does it make him of his dependent

dent Condition, and the Uncertainty of SERM.  
 earthly Riches, by how many sudden and X.  
 unexpected Calamities, that boasted Wealth  
 in which he placed so prophane a Confidence, is liable to be taken from him.

AND sometimes we see it does please Almighty God to make Examples of this Sort; to humble such haughty and self-confiding Men, by reducing them from their towering Height, and all the Wantonness of Prosperity, to the Extremity of Want and Misery. And whenever this happens to be the Case; Who are then so pitifully abjected? Who are such supple Petitioners for Favour or Bounty, as they who would confer none, when they had it in their Power? Then they can talk of the Vicissitude of human Affairs, and of the Obligation incumbent on Men to be helpful to one another, from their Subjection to the same Accidents, and the Possibility that what has happened to one, may befall another.

SUCH Arguments, though they come with a very ill Grace from the Mouth of one, who has been known to have spoke so different a Language, and to have acted so opposite a Part, do often indeed make  
 an

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SERM. an Impression on tender Hearts, and draw  
 X. not only Compassion but Relief, from the  
 Generous and Good-natured, who are more  
 apt to look back with Pity on the Grandeur from which he is fallen, and the unhappy Change of his Condition, than to reflect with Indignation and Reproaches, on the Pride and Insolence, with which he enjoyed his former Prosperity, and the unprofitable Greediness with which he engrossed the Fruits of it to himself.

BUT the universal Hatred which such a Person naturally contracts, will not always be suppressed ; nor his former Aversion to doing good Offices, be covered by a charitable Oblivion, nor be lost under the soft Relentings, and a melting Commiseration of his present Sufferings. Some free Speakers there will be, who have experienced his past Cruelty, and how utterly void he was of all Yearnings of Pity and humane Sentiments, and will not be restrained from breaking out into Insults and Reproaches ; which, though far from being commendable in *them*, must be so much the more grating to *him*, in as much as he is conscious to himself of the Justice of such Reflections, and that as bitter and  
 pungent



pungent as they are, he has well deserved SERM.  
them. X.

IN short, since every Man has an equal Right to confine all his Care and Endeavours to the promoting his own separate Interest, that any one Man has; what must be the Consequence, if such a narrow Way of thinking and acting should become universal? How soon would the choicest and most valuable Blessings of Life, which are mainly secured to us by social and relative Engagements, how soon would all Order and Harmony, Love and Friendship, terminate at once, if every Man were to regard himself alone, and to extend his Care no farther!

SUCH a Situation would put an End to all Intercourse and Commerce; Men would be destitute of all Confidence and Security, and afraid to trust each other; so that all those brave and generous Thoughts, which ought to be in all, and are in many Breasts employed in promoting common Good, and contriving for publick Welfare, would then be confined to a narrow Compass; our Care and Concern, our Counsels and Devices, would be contracted to these two Points, how to avoid the  
stronger,

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SERM. stronger, and where to fall upon the weaker.

X. NOT to stretch forth a Hand to raise

up the Dejected ; to have no Bowels of Compassion for those who are plunged in the Depth of Misery ; to be pitiless and unconcerned at the most bitter Calamities of any one besides, so long as we ourselves are fortunate and at Ease, is a raising out the first Principles of Humanity, as well as treading under Foot the more sublime Precepts of the Gospel. It is a Violation of all the Rules that ought to direct us in the Government of our Lives ; nor is it possible for one so uncharitable and unrelenting, to have any Fear of God, any Regard to Man, any Sense of the Dignity of his own Nature, or indeed any one Spark of Religion or Virtue alive in him.

AND this may suffice to shew that odious and malignant Quality of Selfishness, or mere Self-Love. Let us now consider,

*Secondly,* The Amiability of a generous and publick Spirit.

HE who has a Heart truly open and enlarged, over and above that reasonable Thoughtfulness and Contrivance, with which every prudent Man will be possessed,

sed, about *providing for his own*, and SERM.  
how to proportion his Expences to his X.  
Revenue, as well as how to obtain more  
ample Acquisitions, if fair and honourable  
Methods of advancing his Fortunes pre-  
sent themselves in his Way; I say, be-  
yond this domestick Care, he will have  
Room enough in his Thoughts to let  
them be employed sometimes in the Ser-  
vice of his Friends, his Neighbours, and  
his Country; which have not only his best  
Wishes and hearty Desires for the Success  
of their Affairs, but he makes it his Stu-  
dy to promote their Welfare, and puts him-  
self to a voluntary Trouble and Expence,  
in order to extricate them from Difficul-  
ties, and free them from Dangers, and to  
remove such Impediments as obstruct the  
Progress of any good and laudable Design.  
The Consideration uppermost in his Mind,  
is, how much Benefit will be received, what  
Advantages procured in the main, from such  
a Scheme or Project, or Method of acting,  
without scrupulously weighing, whether  
his Share of the Advantage will equal, or  
fall short of the Proportion he bears in the  
Charge of bringing it to a successful Issue.  
If he has contributed more than others,  
he



SERM. he never grutches nor repines at it : He  
 X. has the Pleasure of reflecting that a bene-  
 ficial Act is done, and that although he  
 has not been able to animate others to  
 promote it in the same Degree with him-  
 self, he has however been instrumental in  
 causing some Good to be done, and the  
 Receivers are heartily welcome both to his  
 Pains, and his Contributions.

THIS may appear but a poor Satisfac-  
 tion to little and groveling Minds, who  
 have no Idea of any Joy that can arise  
 from the Reflection on any Thing that is  
 not attended with present Profit, and look  
 upon every Thing as a losing Bargain,  
 where more is expended than received.  
 But large and capacious Souls have far no-  
 bler Sentiments ; they know how to value  
 and enjoy a Loss, and find a secret Plea-  
 sure in the Diminution of their Fortune,  
 when honourably and worthily employed.

WE are sure that God Almighty, who  
 gives every Thing, and receives Nothing, is  
 a most perfectly blessed and happy Being ;  
 and the nearer we resemble him in any of  
 our Actions, by so much we advance our  
 own Happiness. To be both able and  
 willing to make others happy, is a small  
 Ray

Ray of the Divine Power and Goodness; SERM.  
and the Joy, which arises in the Soul of X.  
a compassionate Man, from the Sense of his  
having raised up the Dejected, comforted  
the Disconsolate, and refreshed the Faint  
and Languishing, who till relieved by his  
pious Bounty, were in a perishing Condi-  
tion; the Joy, I say, which the Sense of  
this must excite in the Breast of such a  
Benefactor, is inexpressible, far exceeding  
not only the most exquisite of sensual De-  
lights, but even that Pleasure and Satisfac-  
tion which is felt by those Objects of his  
Beneficence, upon the happy Change of  
their Condition, when they find themselves  
so seasonably rescued from their calamitous  
Estate, restored to Ease, and blessed with  
a comfortable Subsistence.

SUCH a friendly Promoter of the Good  
of others may survey the Objects of his  
Love, with some Degree of that Satisfaction  
wherewith God beheld his Workmanship,  
when he had finished the several Parts of  
the Creation, and pronounced *that they*  
*were good.*

To such as have the Heart thus to dis-  
pose of Riches, they are indeed a Blessing;

SERM. all that they are good for besides, beyond  
 X. *what is sufficient to provide for us the Ne-*  
*cessaries of Life, is but fantastical and ima-*  
*ginary. Neither a Man's Life, nor his*  
*Happiness in it, consists in the Abundance*  
*of the Things which he possesses. Neither*  
*the covetous Rich Man, that hoards his*  
*Wealth, nor the luxurious Rich Man,*  
*that expends it in Pomp and Pagean-*  
*try, has, in Truth, any other Good in it,*  
*than the beholding it with his Eyes. It*  
*may procure him indeed the empty Satis-*  
*faction of being gazed at, or talked of:*  
*But alas! How little of solid Good is either*  
*of these attended with? An odd, ridicu-*  
*lous, or extravagant Figure, will attract*  
*more Eyes, than the gayest Equipage, or*  
*most costly Furniture. And as for a Man's*  
*Name and Character, who would not ra-*  
*ther choose not to have it mentioned at*  
*all, than not mentioned with Respect?*

THIS seems to be the only End that is  
 sought after by those who delight in Show  
 and Pomp: And yet this very End might  
 be much better compassed by another Way  
 than by that which they affect. For does  
 it not give a sweeter Fragrancy to a Man's  
 Name,



Name, and does not every one speak of SERM.  
 him with higher Expressions of Honour X.  
 and Esteem, who has been a common Be-  
 nefactor, and relieved a Multitude of ne-  
 cessitous Persons; that were destitute of all  
 Support, though in his own Garb and Ap-  
 pearance, he may differ but little from the  
 Vulgar, than of him who shines in the  
 greatest Splendor, and feeds a Multitude  
 of idle and useless Mouths, whose only  
 Business is to increase his State, and swell  
 out his Retinue?

I AM far from recommending it as the  
 chief Aim a Man should pursue, in doing  
 kind and friendly Offices, and being ser-  
 viceable to those among whom he con-  
 verses; that such a Behaviour may gain  
 him a general Applause and Approbation,  
 and make him honoured and esteemed:  
 He who is beneficent upon that Principle  
 only, can be said to do only an Act politi-  
 cally and prudentially commendable, but it  
 is no Act of Religion. But when the pri-  
 mary Intention of any Deed of Charity  
 is directed to the Glory of God, and a De-  
 sire of pleasing Him is the governing Mo-  
 tive which excited the Actor to the Per-

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SERM. formance of it; such a one has a secure

X. Title to the Effect of God's Promises, and  
an Heavenly Reward; and has likewise a  
reasonable Prospect of obtaining the Good-  
will of Men, which seldom fails of ac-  
companying such Actions, whether the  
Author was at all influenced by any such  
Expectation, or not.

I AM willing to hope, that the greater  
Part of the Founders and Endowers of  
those charitable Incorporations committed  
to your Inspection, were acted by that bet-  
ter and more sublime Principle, and have  
been rewarded accordingly: They have  
certainly in Fact been the Promoters of  
much Good, and the Redressers of great  
Evil: They have been instrumental in  
making great Numbers easy and happy  
in this mortal State, and afforded them  
the probable Means of acquiring a more  
durable Happiness in that which is to  
come: And I charitably hope, that no  
Unthankfulness or Misapplication will ren-  
der such Donations ineffectual with Re-  
spect to the Receivers, nor any unwarran-  
table and sinister Aim in conferring them,  
unrewardable on the Part of the Givers.

AND

in Easter-Week, 1731.

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AND here, that it may appear to how **SERM**  
good Purposes your several Hospitals have **X.**  
been employed; how many miserable Ob-  
jects have from Time to Time been re-  
lieved from the forest Distresses, by being  
admitted into those friendly Places of Re-  
ception, and how much farther so useful  
and commendable a Design may be still  
extended, give me Leave, according to  
your annual Custom, to read to you,

*A true REPORT of the great Num-  
ber of poor Children, and other poor  
People, maintained in the several  
Hospitals, under the pious Care of the  
Lord-Mayor, Commonalty, and Ci-  
tizens of London, the Year last past.*

[ *Here the Report was read.* ]

I may now be expected to subjoin some-  
thing by way of Exhortation, to stir up  
the Liberality of well-disposed Christians  
toward the Enlargement of these Foun-  
dations, with a special Application to their  
several Institutions.



SERM.

X.



BUT having done that twice already, when I have formerly been called to this Office, and urged such Arguments in Favour of the respective Kinds of Charity, as I hoped might be most prevailing, I rather chuse to refer you to what I have already said, than either to repeat the same, or seek for new ones. And I trust, that what has been now offered in Recommendation of a generous and publick Spirit in general, if it proves of any Avail at all, will of Course be applied to the Promotion of some one or more of those special Branches of Charity, for the Encouragement of which you are now assembled.

HOWEVER, one particular Case I shall briefly touch upon, and it is that of the *Incurables*. The last Time I spoke from this Place, I took Occasion to lament the deplorable Condition of those forlorn Wretches, who had such a Sentence pronounced upon them, who are excluded from the Participation of such kindly Relief, when they most want it, and turned abroad to shift for themselves, when they are most incapable of exerting any of the Powers and Functions either of their  
Mind

Mind or Body : Disabled in their Limbs, di-  
sturbed in their Senses, destitute of Friends :  
Whilst their present Anguish is heightened  
by the forest of all Aggravations, the De-  
spair of ever being better.

SERM.

X.

IN Commiseration of the unhappy Cir-  
cumstances of such hopeless Creatures, I  
was led to express a distant Wish, that  
God might put it into the Heart of some  
liberal Benefactor, to erect an Hospital ap-  
propriated to such Patients : And it was  
not long before I had the Satisfaction of  
perceiving that such a Design was actually  
formed, and partly carried into Execution.  
I have no Authority to affirm, and it  
would be too assuming to suppose, that so  
commendable and beneficial an Undertak-  
ing took its Rise from any Hint which  
was then dropped : It may have seemed  
good to God, the supreme Fountain of all  
Mercy, to possess the Souls of those who  
first set on foot, and are zealous in for-  
warding this Work, with so pious a Reso-  
lution, without the Suggestion of any  
earthly Monitor : Praised be the Divine  
Providence, that so desirable and necessary  
a Scheme is not only in Agitation, but al-

SERM. ready begun, and the Benefits of it actually felt by a considerable Number of unhappy People, and a separate Fund established; so that they who are particularly touched with a Sense of such Misfortunes, and willing to contribute, according to their Abilities, toward making the State of such Objects more easy and comfortable, may know where to apply even a small Sum, in such Manner, as, by being added to other Sums, directed to the same Use, cannot fail of procuring a proportionable Degree of Help and Refreshment for those whose Lot it must otherwise be, to remain most friendless and disconsolate Out-casts.

I HOPE there will be none so cruel as to alledge, that, when once a Case appears to be desperate, when all the Art of the Physician, and all the Power of Medicine is seen to be ineffectual, it is to no purpose to take any farther Care of such a Patient; that any Help bestowed upon him, is but adding to his Sufferings and prolonging his Misery; and consequently that our Labour and Expence about him may not be laid out in vain; that he ought to be  
given



given up to his unhappy Fate, and left to SERM.  
perish without Redress. This surely is X.  
carrying the Point of good Husbandry  
much too far, to the Subversion not only  
of common Charity, but of common Hu-  
manity.

FOR though I have before allowed, and  
do still allow, that the Exclusion of such  
Objects, miserable as they are, from the  
Hospitals appropriated to the Curable, is  
both a justifiable and necessary Piece of  
OEconomy; yet sure it becomes so much  
the more reasonable for other Hospitals,  
or Branches of Hospitals, to be appropri-  
ated to *them*.

WILL it be said, what Good can they  
receive from such Foundations, if erected?  
Alas! the Fortunate and Flourishing, who  
live in a full Affluence of Wealth, and  
enjoy a Luxuriancy of Health and Strength,  
little imagine how sensible a Blessing many  
Things which they wantonly waste, and  
set no manner of Value upon, would  
prove to poor languishing Wretches, if  
conferred upon them: That even those  
Maladies which are past all Cure, may  
however be made easy: That though Re-  
storing

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SERM. storing Medicines can have no Effect, yet

X. Palliating ones may be successfully applied; and the bare Mitigation of Smart, though it is sure to return again, is a very desirable Relief. To those who have groaned under a continued Torture, every Abatement of Anguish, every Interval even of Stupefaction is a Degree of Pleasure; but the Absence of Pain, joined with a Sense of its being absent, is a kind of Paradise.

THUS is human Life, even in its most lost and deplorable State, capable of being profited, and of enjoying the Fruits of such charitable Gifts, as the pious Liberality of good Christians has, or shall destine to the Patients Use and Comfort.

*MAY THE GOD OF LOVE continue to raise up a Succession of friendly Contributors toward the Relief of such Objects, and may He prosper the State of all those charitable Communities, of which you have the Care and Management, and grant that all who are Partakers of your Bounty, may prove grateful to their Benefactors, useful to the Commonwealth, and give Praise and Glory to Almighty God. Amen.*

SERMON XI.



# SERMON XI.

A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor,  
*Jan. 30, 1709-10.*



I KINGS xxi. 9, 10.

*Proclaim a Fast, and set Naboth  
on high among the People :*

*And set two Men, Sons of Belial,  
before him, to bear Witness against  
him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme  
God and the King : and then  
carry him out and stone him, that  
he may die.*



HERE is scarce any one In-SERM.  
stance of the shedding innocent XI,  
Blood, recorded in Holy Scrip-  
ture, which has not, at some  
Time or other, been applied to the Occa-  
sion of this Day's Solemnity, even that of  
our



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SERM. our \* blessed Saviour not excepted, whose

**XI.** Steps we have with one Voice declared in the Service of the Church the blessed Martyr chearfully to have followed. But here indeed it concerns us to tread warily. We can only affirm of the greatest Saints and brightest Luminaries of the Church, that they have made some faint Approaches toward that great Exemplar, without presuming to equal either the Merits or the Sufferings of any meer Man to those of our crucified Redeemer : In all other Parallels there is less Danger of Excess, since most of them will be found, in many Circumstances, to fall short of the Fact committed on this Day.

Now although in such a comparative Way of arguing, where we single out some remarkable Passage from the Records of past Ages, and adapt it, as far as it will naturally bear, to some After-Occurrence that has fallen out nearer our own Times, it cannot be expected that both the Cases should be in all Respects exactly the same, without the least Variation ; yet when we

\* Second Collect for the Day.

can

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can point out some of the principal and SERM. Master-Strokes of each of them, which XL have a near Resemblance of one another, when the Methods and Ways of acting, the Motives and Inducements to it, with other concurrent Circumstances, are the same; this may be enough to justify the Choice of the Subject, and make it serve at least as a fair Introduction to the Matter in Debate.

I mention this, because of one remarkable Disagreement, which you must needs have been before-hand with me in observing, between the Case of *Naboth*, and that of this Day's *Royal Sufferer*, who as he had lived the Ornament, so died the *Martyr* of the *English Church and Monarchy*: And that is, that in the former of them, an innocent Subject was murdered by a wicked King (or at least by his Instruments and Agents, not without his Approbation and Consent, as appeared by his subsequent Behaviour, in seizing his Inheritance, as well as by his own Confession, when he submitted to the Prophet's Charge, and humbled himself for it) whereas in the latter, a just and pious King

SERM. King was deprived at once of his Crown

LXI. and Life by wicked and rebellious Subjects.

But there are other Resemblances between them, that will make Amends for this Disparity. And therefore I shall proceed,

*First*, To draw a Parallel between the two Cases, and shew what is common to them both.

*Secondly*, To consider the Nature and Consequences of the Fact committed on this Day. And

*Thirdly*, I SHALL conclude with one or two Moral Reflections.

*First*, I AM to draw a Parallel between the two Cases, and show what is common to them both. Here then we may observe, that the Persons compared were both good Men: Both were murdered with a pretended Show of Justice, and with religious Solemnities: Both for the same Cause, because they would not part with *the Inheritance of their Fathers*: Neither of them suffered singly; but the Enemies  
of



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of each extended their Malice to the whole Race of them. SERM. XI.

FIRST I say they were both good Men.

That *Naboth* was so, we may very fairly conjecture from his Behaviour in the Matter of the Vineyard; and from the Severity of God's Wrath toward *Abab* and his Family, for unjustly putting him to Death. For although the Murder even of a wicked Man, either by false Accusation, or secret Treachery, is a very heinous and detestable Thing; (and that Life that is forfeited to Justice by a Thousand real Crimes, yet if innocent *quoad hoc*, and taken away by wicked Subornation, on weak and insufficient Evidence, for that which is not a Crime, or which was not committed, will derive a Sentence of Bloodguiltiness, nay of the shedding innocent Blood, on the Contrivers and Actors in such an Execution;) yet we cannot suppose, that this is, in so excessive a Degree, provoking, or that it entails the Divine Vengeance on so many Generations, as when the Person condemned is eminent for Piety and Virtue.

IF

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SERM. IF indeed we were to judge of Things  
 XI. by their first Appearance, the Carriage of  
 Naboth toward Abab, in denying him his  
 Vineyard, might seem to have been very  
 churlish and undutiful, especially when  
 offered a *better Vineyard* in Exchange for  
 it, or an Equivalent in *Money*. And the  
 King's condescending way of Address,  
 when he thus expresses himself, *If it shall  
 seem good to thee, and if it please thee;*  
 might be thought to have deserved a bet-  
 ter Answer than, *I will not give thee my  
 Vineyard.*

BUT we must consider, on the other  
 Hand, that the Thing which the King  
 desired, was absolutely unlawful, and ex-  
 pressly forbid by the Command of God;  
 the smallest Ceremony of whose Appoint-  
 ment could not be dispensed with. We  
 may learn from *Lev. 25.* and *Numb. 36.*  
 how straitly the *Jews* were enjoined to  
 look upon the Inheritance of their Fathers  
 as sacred: The very numerical Lands and  
 Possessions were to be continually prefer-  
 ved in the respective Families to which  
 they were allotted, and the present Occu-  
 pants had no Power of totally alienating  
 them,

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them, but only till they could be redeemed by one of their Kin, and not so long as that, if a Year of *Jubilee* should first happen, when all Things were to be restored as at the Beginning: And even that temporary Alienation was not to be made, but under the Pressure of extreme Necessity, which it seems was not *Naboth's* Case. So that he looked on the Proposal, as a Thing he could not with a safe Conscience comply with, and therefore speaks, you see, with some Abhorrence of it, (though not altogether so bluntly as *Ahab* repeated it to his Wife) *The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the Inheritance of my Fathers unto thee.* From this, I say, and the other Consideration before-mentioned, we may reasonably infer that *Naboth* was a Man of Uprightness and Integrity; though the Scripture has distinguished him by no other Title, but that of *Naboth the Jeshraelite.*

BUT we have better Arguments than bare Conjectures and remote Conclusions to induce us to believe, that our martyred Sovereign was highly deserving of this Character, of which we have all the Proof and Demonstration that 'tis possible for

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SERM. one Man to have of the Integrity of  
 XI. another.

IT is true, God alone is an infallible Judge and Discerner of the Heart; he only beholds with an unerring Eye the Uprightness or Obliquity of human Thoughts and Intentions; and therefore none but he can absolutely and decisively pronounce of any Person, that he is either holy and sincere, or wicked and prophane.

BUT we Men must form our Judgment from the outward Actions, and wheresoever we find a regular Conduct, where all the Duties to God and Man, as far as we can observe, are exactly and punctually discharged, where there are no visible Infractions of Divine or Human Laws, or none but such as may be imputed to human Frailty; we are to look upon a Person so qualified as a Man of Probity and Virtue.

THIS is no more than is due in common Justice. But *Christian Charity* will oblige us yet farther, even where there are some suspicious Appearances, if the Character of the Person be in other Respects unblemished; to err (if we must err)

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err) on the better Side, and make a favour-  
able Construction. SERM.

XI.

THIS is spoken at large, and not that there is any Occasion for this last Supposal, with Regard to the Subject I am upon: There being Nothing in the Behaviour of that *excellent Prince*, that has so much as an indirect Aspect, Nothing I mean that can affect his general Character.

WHEN I affirm this, I consider him chiefly as a private Christian, for in his *Royal Capacity* indeed, as we find him represented by the designing Artifice of his malicious and restless Enemies, there are faulty Appearances enough. And yet the very Persons, who thus industriously blackened and defamed him, and loaded him with so many unjust Reproaches on the Account of his *Regal Administration*; (which can never be so excellent, as to give no Handle to the *Factionous*, the *Guilty*, and the *Disappointed*, to censure and malign it, and will be always liable to Misconstruction, the Reasons of State being so *Mysterious*) yet could never charge on him any gross Misbehaviour in Point of

Z 2

Moral

338 *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor,*

SERM. Moral Duty, any one habitual Vice, or  
 XI. indulged Passion, though they wanted not  
 Means of prying into his most secret Commerce and private Correspondence; and nothing, we know, is so quick-sighted as Malice.

HIS Devotion to God was regular and constant both in publick and in private, and that, not cold and formal, but with an ardent Zeal and inflamed Affection. In the midst of the perplexing Cares that encompass a Throne, and with which *his* Throne was peculiarly beset; he always found Leisure for the Exercises of Religion: He was never so dazzled with the Splendor of an *earthly* Crown, as not to prefer before it a *heavenly* and *immortal* one: Nor was he ever unmindful of this important Truth, that as *his* Subjects were accountable to *him*, (though in the End they quite inverted that Order) so was he himself to render an Account of *his* Actions at a greater Tribunal before the King of Kings.

IN the Midst of the highest Plenty, and all the Means of gratifying a sensual Appetite that *Royal Affluence* could administer,



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ster, he was remarkably temperate, chaste, SERM.  
and sober. His conjugal Affection has XI.  
been even imputed as a *Crime*. He was  
an inviolable Observer of his matrimonial  
Vow, a Virtue not *too common* in the  
World, a very rare one indeed in *Princes*.  
Nor was he less eminent for Clemency and  
Justice, and a tender Regard for the Wel-  
fare of his Subjects.

AND if we consider him in the last Scene  
of his Life, in his Behaviour both before  
and at the Scaffold; we may observe an  
admirable Composition of Christian Meek-  
ness and Royal Grandeur, how under the  
extremest Pressures he would never be  
prevailed with, to do any thing unbe-  
coming either the *Christian* or the *King*.

As he had lived, he dyed a true Pro-  
fessor of the purest reform'd Faith: And  
his Character has this Advantage, even  
from the *reproachful* Manner of his Death;  
that his last Declaration so publickly made  
in the Face of the World, was not ca-  
pable of being denied, or misrepresented.  
Whereas had they dispatched him by Poy-  
son or Assassination, or any other Way of  
Murder, that had carried less of Pomp

SERM. and Ostentation; the Accusation had been obvious, that he died a *Papist*, which his Enemies would not have failed to have reported, and his Friends could not so convincingly have disproved.

XI.

HIS admirable and instructing Legacy to his Children, his praying for his Murderers, his patient Resignation to the Will of God, and indeed all the several Parts of his Deportment at that dismal Juncture; do conspire to raise in us the highest Esteem and Veneration for his Memory. And sure we may allow to one who was endued with so large a Share of Virtues, with so inconsiderable a Mixture of Defects, the Character and Denomination of a good Man. I mean in a qualified Sense, for, in an absolute Sense, we know who has told us, there is none good but God. And this is one Point in which *Naboth* and he agree.

THE next is, that they both were murdered with a pretended show of Justice, and with religious Solemnities.

IN order to *Naboth's* Murder there was a *Fast* proclaimed, a solemn Assembly called, a formal Accusation forged, and suborned

Witnesses

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Witnesses produced. The principally in- SERM.  
tended Wickedness was thus ushered in XI.  
with a preparatory Combination of other  
Crimes; thus closely was the Train of  
Mischiefs laid, by the Contrivance of wicked  
*Jezebel*; that *Hypocrisy*, *Perjury* and  
*false Judgment* should be the Prelude and  
Introduction to *Murder*.

AND was not this exactly the Case of  
our *Royal Sufferer*? Was there not a Day  
of *Humiliation* appointed? Was not the  
nefarious Business in Agitation dignified  
with the specious Title of *the Lord's Work*?  
Did not the chief Authors of that Cruelty  
pretend to be *seeking the Lord*, whilst  
their Instruments were embruing their  
Hands in the Blood of the *Lord's Anointed*?

How horribly did they profane the  
Name of God, whilst they invoked him,  
as accessory to their Bloody Machinations,  
and besought him to strengthen their  
Hands in that diabolical Work! How  
wretchedly did they pervert his Word,  
which teaches all Obedience and Reverence  
to Princes; whilst even from those sacred  
Writings they would pretend to justify not  
only the highest Insolence and Contempt,



SERM. but even the actual Murder of his *lawful*

XI. *Vice-gerent!* To how base Purposes were the Ordinances of Religion prostituted, whilst they fasted for the Success of that impious Act, which it requires a perpetual Fast to deprecate the Guilt of: And made long Prayers only for a Pretense, when they were making a Royal Widow, and devouring Houses and Lands, stately Palaces, and princely Revenues with insatiable Greediness! How ill did it accord with their professed Purity and Godliness, after they had strained at so many Gnats, to swallow such a Camel!

COULD they, in reality, have been held by any religious Ties, they would have paid some Regard, if not to the general Precepts of Obedience, if not to the former Oaths of Allegiance they had taken; yet at least to their own *Solemn League and Covenant*, that precious Test of Disloyalty, they so eagerly contended for, and which they had contrived as a Snare for others, whilst, through the Deadness of their Consciences, they were unrestrained themselves.

EVEN

EVEN *that Engagement*, rebellious as it SERM.  
 was, provided for the Security of the XI.  
 King's Person, which they were bound,  
 by all that was Sacred, to protect and de-  
 fend; and consequently the putting him  
 to Death, besides all the other bad Cir-  
 cumstances, was an Act of the most *deli-*  
*berate Perjury* that ever was committed.

BUT as if something was still wanting  
 to fill up the Measure of their complica-  
 ted Impiety; they added Hypocrisy to the  
 rest, gave a religious Turn to their execra-  
 ble Proceedings, and in the Depth of all  
 this Mischief, pretended a Zeal for God's  
 Glory, and to have nothing so much at  
 Heart, as promoting the Purity of his  
 Worship.

NOR was *Piety* the only false Pretence,  
 they would make a show of *Justice* too:  
 They would seem to do that by *Law*,  
 which was an open Violation of all the  
 Laws both of God and Man. To this  
 End was erected a Mock-Tribunal of Self-  
 created Judges, who by Virtue of that  
 usurped and imaginary Authority, presum-  
 ed to set before them as a Criminal, their  
 unquestionably rightful Sovereign. They  
 had

344. *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor,*

SERMON. had false Witnesses, *Sons of Belial*, ready  
 XII at Hand to have born their Testimony  
 against him, and to have charged him  
 with such Things, as he not only, in Fact,  
 was clear of, but which he was not ca-  
 pable of committing.

*Naboth* indeed might, though he did  
 not, have \* *curfed God and the King*.  
 There were really such Offences, though  
 there was no such Offender. Whereas in  
 the Case of our martyred Prince, the  
 Crime it self was as fictitious as the per-  
 sonal Charge. He not only was not, but  
 could not be guilty of that Treason they  
 accused him of, since by our known Con-  
 stitution, it was against himself only that  
 any Treason could be committed. We  
 find in no Records the mention of such a  
 Crime, as the *Lese-Majesty of the People*,  
 nor that the cruellest Tyrants were ever  
 taxed with being *Rebels* to their own Sub-  
 jects. It is possible for them to misgovern,  
 to subvert Fundamentals, to abuse their

\* So the *Hebrew* Verb should be rendred here,  
 as it is elsewhere. The *Arabick* and *Chaldee* express  
 it by two different Words : Thou didst *BlaspHEME*  
 God, and *Curse* the King.

Trust,



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Trust, or to forsake it, and drive the People to a Necessity of transferring their Allegiance (of which our own Times have furnished us with an Instance :) But they can never be guilty of *Treason*, nor suffer the Punishment of *Traytors*. SERM. XI.

WHEN therefore the good King disowned this illegal Judicature, and refused (as he well might) to plead his Cause before them; they still went on with a Mask of Justice, and in Mock-Representation of a legal Process, to Sentence and Condemn him, and Sign a bloody Warrant for his Execution.

ANOTHER Thing in which his Case does nearly resemble that of *Naboth* is, that they both were murdered for the same Cause, because they would not part with the *Inheritance of their Fathers*.

*Naboth* might have compounded for his Life, by relinquishing his *Vineyard*, nay he might have had an equivalent too. But as he conceived himself bound in Conscience, religiously to preserve his original Patrimony, he was under an unhappy Necessity of making such a Refusal, as brought him to that untimely End.

AND

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SERM. AND the Desire of his *Inheritance* was

IX. the Motive that induced our unnatural  
Country-men, to take away the Life of  
their lawful King. The inherent Rights  
and Prerogatives of the Crown, which his  
Royal Predecessors had uncontestably en-  
joyed, through a Succession of many Ages,  
were one after another disputed with *him*,  
and in the End violently extorted. What  
he could depart from, with Safety to his  
Conscience and Honour, he gave them,  
by a voluntary Consent, to preserve the  
Quiet of his Kingdom; but when he per-  
ceived that nothing would content them;  
(their Demands still rising, as his Conces-  
sions were larger) he adhered with a sted-  
dy Resolution to those Branches of Power,  
which he judged to be inseparable from  
the Royal Dignity, and parted with them  
and his Life together.

BEFORE they had thus compassed their  
wicked Ends, and were become Masters  
of all without Controul, whilst there was  
yet the Appearance and Shadow of Kingly  
Government, and nothing could be valid  
without the Royal Sanction; even then,  
though they left him the *Name*, they ar-  
rogated

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rogated to themselves the *Power*. With SERM.  
what repeated Importunities did they daily XI.  
tear from him his most trusted and faithful  
Servants, under the Character of *Evil Coun-  
sellors*, and thrust into his Presence and  
Councils, their own mercenary Creatures,  
Men of notorious Faction and Disloyalty,  
the profest Haters both of his Person and  
Authority, as the only Men to be *confided*  
in! How justly might he have answered  
their haughty and unreasonable Demands  
(for such in Effect were their *humble Pe-  
titions*,) in the Words of the wisest of  
Princes (when a very improper Application  
was made to him, in Behalf of one, who  
had so little Pretension to *favour*, that *Im-  
punity* was more than he had deserved)  
*Ask for him the Kingdom also.* 1 Kings  
ii. 22.

THEY wanted, in short, such a Power as  
should create Dependencies on *them*, and  
tie fast to their Service such Instruments  
of Mischief as they should have Occasion  
to make use of. And, not to descend to  
all the several Branches of Royalty, it was  
Dominion and Government they aimed  
at; an Affectation of Lording and Ruling  
it,



348 *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor,*

SERM. it, was the real Ground of their seditious

XI. Outcries (as the Event sufficiently show'd) however they varnished over their Designs with more plausible Pretences.

ONCE more, we may observe another Resemblance between these two innocent Persons, in that neither of them suffered singly, but the Enemies of each extended their Malice to the whole Race of them. Though the History now before us is silent as to *Naboth's Family*, and only relates what befel him in his own Person, yet we may learn from 2 *Kings*, ix. 26. what became of them. *Surely I have seen Yesterday the Blood of Naboth, and the Blood of his Sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite thee in this Plat.*

IT cannot, I confess, be equally affirmed, with relation to our martyr'd Sovereign, that the Blood of *his Sons* too calls for Vengeance, that only Stream of Royal Blood having been spilt, that ran within his own Veins. But though they escaped with Life, (no Thanks to the Usurpers of their Inheritance that they did so) yet were they divested of their just Rights, which none of them had then done any Thing  
to

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to forfeit, driven into Exile, branded with SERM.  
Names of Infamy and Reproach, and de- XI.  
clared *Traytors* and *Rebels* themselves, as  
well as their Abettors and Adherents.

HAVING said thus much by way of Pa-  
rallel, give me Leave to conclude the  
Comparison between these two Innocents,  
as I first introduced it, with taking No-  
tice of one material Difference between  
the two Histories. *Naboth's Murderer*,  
though *above* the Reach of *human* Justice,  
saw, and confessed, and bewailed his  
Guilt, and humbled himself so effectually  
before God, that the Vengeance he requi-  
red for that *innocent Blood* (for *innocent*  
*Blood* will be avenged, nor is it any Secu-  
rity to us, that it was not shed by *us*, or  
in *our Days*) was not immediately taken,  
but postponed till another Generation.

BUT the *Royal Murderers* shew'd no  
Remorse. The *Regicides* of *this Day* con-  
tinued to the last inflexible and obdurate:  
Their Hearts were so hardened by the just  
Judgment of God for their accumulated  
Wickedness, that even those of them, who  
by his peculiar Providence were reserved  
for *publick Justice*, were so far from any  
Signs

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SERM. Signs of Repentance, that they even gloried in the inhuman Deed. I come now,  
in the

*Second Place,* To consider the *Nature and Consequences* of the Fact committed on this Day. The *Nature* of it may be in a great Measure judged, from what has been already said. But farther to convince us of the enormous Guilt of it, let us take it as attended with the following Circumstances.

FOR a Sovereign and *Hereditary Monarch* (it was then an *Hereditary Monarchy* sure) after many other previous Outrages and Affronts, to be brought to the Bar, as a *common Malefactor*, and that before a pretended *High Court* composed of his own *Subjects*, surrounded with a Guard of his own *Soldiers*, to be arraigned of *Treason*, to be sentenced to *Death*, and executed on a *Scaffold*, in his *capital City*, and before the Walls of his own *Palace*: And all this to gratify the Ambition or Revenge of a few turbulent Spirits, whilst a far greater Number, who disapproved of that rigorous Extremity, could yet be contented



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contented to stand by as unconcerned SERM.  
Spectators, and suffer the bloody Tragedy XI.  
to be acted, without offering to interpose,  
or stirring to the Rescue of their Prince :  
The Fact I say thus circumstantiated, is  
not to be equalled in any History, by  
which Majesty it self, as well as the Per-  
son of the King, was so outrageously in-  
sulted.

AND that all this should be done in a  
Kingdom, *by the undoubted and fundamen-  
tal Laws* whereof (I speak in the very  
Words of a Law, made indeed since the  
horrid Fact, but made, not to constitute,  
but recognize this *essential Prerogative*, as  
antecedently inherent in the Crown, that)  
\* *neither the Peers of the Realm, nor the  
Commons, nor both together, in Parliament,  
nor out of Parliament, nor the People col-  
lectively, nor representatively, nor any other  
Persons whatsoever, ever had, have, or  
ought to have, any coercive Power over the  
Persons of the Kings of this Realm.*

AND if no such Authority was lodged  
with the *whole Body* of Subjects, how

\* Stat. 12. Car. 2. Ch. 30. §. 7.

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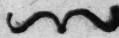
SERM. much less could it be claimed by that in-

XI. *considerable Remnant* of one House, which  
 without the Concurrence of the other,  
 and whilst the far greater Part of its own  
 Members were kept out by Force of Arms,  
 had the Confidence to usurp the venerable  
 Name of *Parliament*!

Never was that *happy Part* of our *Con-*  
*stitution*, that *Necessary Fence* against *Ar-*  
*bitrary Rule*, and Bulwark of *English* Laws  
 and Liberties, so reproachfully perverted.  
 Never were the People of *England* so un-  
 truly said to be represented : Which they  
 no more were, by the corrupt Refuse of  
 that Assembly, than the *Catholick Church*  
 was fairly represented in the pretended  
*Council of Trent*, where only those could  
 be admitted, who were the known Favour-  
 ers of the *Pope's Supremacy*, and who would  
 be sure to do his Work effectually.

BUT let us suppose they had a Power  
 over his Person, and withal that he  
 had misemployed his Regal Administra-  
 tion as much as some have represent-  
 ed him to have done ; let us take all  
 for Truth that inveterate Malice, or fac-  
 tious Prejudice has endeavoured to fasten

on

on him; even these Provocations were SERM.  
 far from sufficient to justify so extra- XI.  
 vagant a Remedy as the shedding of his   
 Blood.

MUCH less when they lived under so mild a Government, and a Prince so tender of the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects as he naturally was in his own Temper.

I PRETEND not to deny that, even in his Reign, there were some just Causes of Complaint, some real Grievances, some unwarrantable Impositions and unjustifiable Demands. Princes are but Men, and fallible like other Men; nor is it any great Wonder if the best of them Mistake the Extent of their Prerogative, when persuaded into an undue Opinion of it, by those that should advise them better.

BUT how easily might those Grievances have been set right in Time, had not the rough and undutiful Manner in which the Redress of them was sought, made him believe for a time there were none that needed it. But when once he was convinced of their Reality, how willingly did he redress them all, and more than all,



354 *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor,*

SERM. that could with any Show of Justice be  
 XI. complained of, or be thought to deserve  
 the Name of Hardships! How often might  
 Things have been brought to a better  
 Temper, and the unhappy Breach accom-  
 modated, had not their own Obstinacy  
 prevented it, whom no Degree of Royal  
 Condescension would satisfy or appease;  
 but his Blood they *would have*, and his  
 Blood they *had*: The Guilt whereof has  
 ever since lain heavy on this sinful Nation,  
 and even now calls for our deepest Humi-  
 liation, to deprecate that Vengeance of  
 Almighty God, which might justly be  
 inflicted on the *remote Posterity* of the  
 Actors in that *unnatural Parricide*.

HE has abundantly testified his Displea-  
 sure at it, by many bad and mischievous  
*Consequences* it has produced, some of  
 which we still smart under, though not  
 the first I am going to mention, which is

THE Confusion of those Times that  
 immediately ensued. The miserable State  
 of *Anarchy* to which this unhappy Coun-  
 try was reduced, after the Extirpation of  
 the *Royal Family*, may be a Warning to  
 all querulous Innovators, who are never  
 con-

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contented with the present State of Things. SERM.  
XI.  
They compassed their Wish at last, and had the Satisfaction of seeing both *Kingly and Episcopal Government* at once abolished, and themselves (as they supposed) in a State of *religious and civil Liberty*.

BUT did they enjoy that *Liberty* any otherwise than in Name? Did it not cost them much dearer to maintain their *new Lords* in their ill-gotten *Tyranny*, than ever it had done to supply the Exigencies of their *lawful Prince*? Was the Freedom of *Parliament*, and Right of *Elections* more inviolably kept? Were they less under the Terror of an *armed Force*? Were there fewer *Executions, Fines and Imprisonments*? Was the Course of the *Law* more free and undisturbed, or *Justice* more equitably and impartially administered? Were the *Taxes* more moderate, the *Loans* of Money less constrained, or the *Publick Faith* (when no Body knew what or where the *Publick* was) a better Security for what was lent, than before this violent Convulsion of the State?

No. The Reverse of all this is notoriously true, if there be any Truth in His-

A a 3

tory.

356 *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayer,*

SERM. tory. They dreamed and raved of Op-  
 XI. pression before, but they were then op-  
 ~~~~~ prest in Earnest. They were before cha-  
 stised with imaginary Whips, but then with
 real Scorpions. And surely it was a just
 Judgment of God upon them for their in-
 constancy of Temper, and eagerness for a
 Change, that when once they had shaken
 off their just Allegiance, and chose new
 Masters for themselves, they were after-
 wards forced to be perpetually changing,
 and could find no Power that was able to
 protect them long, but saw more Turns
 and Revolutions in the Compass of a few
 Months, than had happened in a Thou-
 sand Years before.

NEW Schemes and Models of Govern-
 ment were daily fashioned, some of which
 died in *Embryo*, others made a Blaze for
 a short Time, but no sooner had they
 turned themselves to the new-started Light,
 in hopes to be warmed and directed by it,
 but the airy Meteor disappeared.

IT was a common Thing then to see
 Servants on Horseback, whilst Princes
 walked on Foot, to see the meanest of the
 People in the highest Places; and one
 might

might have seen *Jotham's Parable* exactly SERM. verified, when instead of the *Fatness of* XI. *the Olive*, and the *Fruitfulness of the Vine*; the supreme Dominion was invested in the despicable, the useless, the hurtful *Brambles*.

THEN as to *Spirituals*. Did the *Authors* of those Troubles find their Account in them? Were they able at last quietly to establish their own Way of Worship, and had they not many contending Rivals? Were not their own Complaints against the Hierarchy, of *taking too much upon them, imposing* on the *Lord's People*, and depriving them of their *Christian Liberty*, returned upon themselves? Was there a greater Advancement of Piety, whilst the *Sacrament* was rarely administered, the Catechizing of Youth exceedingly neglected, and almost all Religion resolved into *Hearing*? Was there a greater *Liberty of Conscience*, when the prevailing Sect for the Time condemned the *Toleration* of the rest as *Antichristian*?

————— *En quo Discordia Cives*
Perduxit miseros!

358 *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayer,*

SERM. *THESE* were the *blessed* Fruits of

XI. *Discord and Rebellion.* This was the
 Price of over-turning a legally and peace-
 ably settled Constitution.

As another bad Effect (but God be
 praised that is over too) of this Day's Cru-
 elty, may be reckoned the imminent Dan-
 ger we were in, not many Years since, of
 the Return of *Popish Superstition* into this
 Nation, to which, in all human Probabi-
 lity, the greatest Part of it had in a little
 Time relapsed, had not Providence de-
 feated the Designs that were formed against
 our Religion, by the late *happy Revolution*.

THAT very Danger, I say, of *Popery*,
 may be imputed, in its Original, to those,
 who by banishing the *Royal Progeny*, and
 obliging them to fly for Shelter to the
 Court of a *Popish Prince*, exposed them
 to the utmost Temptation of changing
 the Religion of the Country they had left,
 for that of the Place where they were en-
 tertained. It did in Fact so happen, that
 they were earnestly solicited to that Ef-
 fect, and one of them, we know, (and
 we had like to have known it at too dear

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a Rate) unhappily complied with the SERM.
Temptation. XI.

BUT there are some ill Consequences of that great Rebellion that still affect us, and particularly the unhappy Divisions that reign among us. It is a sad and deplorable Thing indeed, that Men who are Professors of the same Religion, who have the same political Obligations, who are bound by all the Ties both of Interest and Duty, to direct their Designs and Actions to the same End, should notwithstanding fly into such opposite Extremes, and brand each other with such opprobrious Names.

SUCH Jealousies and Surmises, such *Names of Distinction*, and forming of *Parties*, were the fatal Beginnings of that *Intestine War*, which depopulated and laid waste this flourishing Kingdom, and ended in the *Murder* of the *Sovereign*, and the total Overthrow of all orderly Government both in Church and State. And that Spirit of Division which then began to reign, has never since been totally ejected.

ADD

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SERM. ADD to this, that many loose Principles as to *Government*, were then imbibed, of which it were much to be wished, there were no Tincture still remaining.

AND (which is worst of all) it is too certain, that the Pretences to a more than ordinary Sanctity, and the great Appearance of Godliness in such Numbers of Men, who yet, when the Mask was off, were found to be wicked to the last Degree, and to have acted by no Principles but *Interest* and *Ambition*; gave an unhappy Disgust to many Observers of their Conduct, against all that favoured of Piety and Godliness, and raised an unjust Suspicion in them, that all Religion was counterfeit, that whoever went under the Character of a *devout Person*, was only acting a Part, in order to deceive. Thus were the Seeds of *Atbeism* and *Irreligion* sown, which have since thriven but too well, and yielded a very ungracious Increase.

To the same Cause too we may ascribe almost all our Differences in Religion. We can call upon all the Persuasions but one, who enjoy the Benefit of the *Toleration*, (and may it ever be enjoyed by Consciences

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sciences truly tender) to look back to **SERM.**
those unhappy Times for their first Ori- **XI.**
ginal, and see, in the Midst of how much
Licentiousness and Disorder they were pro-
pagated and began to spread.

I shall only crave your farther Patience,
while I apply what has been said in two
short moral Reflections, both which I
shall take from the concluding Prayer in
the Service for the Day, where we be-
seech God, *that neither the Splendor of
any thing that is great, nor the Conceit of
any thing that is good in us, may any ways
withdraw our Eyes from looking on our-
selves as sinful Dust and Ashes.*

I. THEN, from the tragical Event of
this Day, we may observe the *Uncertainty*
of all *human State and Grandeur*. Of
how short Continuance, and consequently
of how little Value is the most glittering
Pomp, that attracts our vain Eyes, and
strikes us with Admiration ! Of how slip-
pery a Tenure must *lesser* Dignities and
Honours be, if *Majesty* it self be so inse-
cure ! How little is the Condition of Prin-
ces to be envied, who have often Occasion
to envy the *Quiet and Repose* of the mean-
est

362 *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor,*

SERM. est of their Subjects, who can sleep securely, whilst *they* are waking and caring for them! They are equally exposed to Pain and Sickness, to Infirmary and Diseases; they lye as open to a natural, and much *more* open to a violent Death. *Plots* and *Conspiracies*, *Assassinations* and *Poysonings* are Accidents peculiar to the *Royal List* of Mortality, and seldom bring a Subject to his End.

NOR is the *Fame* of Princes less liable to Injury, than their *Persons*. Calumny dares even assault the *Throne*, and fears not to trample on *Regal Sepulchers*. There is none so great and inaccessible, as to be out of the Reach of that intruding Monster; who will blacken and sully the clearest Fame, turn the brightest Ornaments and Beauties into Deformities, detract from the most heroical and princely Virtues, and transform, to the Appearance of such as see by her Glass, a good *Josiah* into a wicked *Jeroboam*. And as the most conspicuous *Greatness* is no Preservative against the common Calamities of the World, so neither

January 30, 1709-10.

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2. Is the most eminent *Goodness*. Try-SERM.
als and Afflictions are the common Lot of XI.
Mortality, and every Man, more or less,
must sustain his Share of them. In this,
the Righteous and Wicked fare alike, nor
can a Man judge of Love or Hatred by all
that is before him.

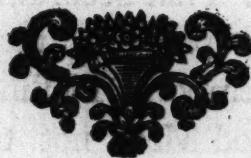
THERE are indeed many Passages of
Scripture, that encourage a good Man to
expect even the Blessings of this Life, and
ordinarily speaking, he does actually enjoy
them, at least in a contented Mind and
quiet Conscience, which comprehends them
all. But we are to look upon these Pas-
sages, as moral Observations, not as abso-
lute Promises: That according to the most
rational, most probable, most natural E-
vent, such temporal Blessings would be
allotted to good Men, not that each par-
ticular good Man should be possessed of
every one of them, for that would be in
some Measure, to have his Portion here.

ALL this is beside our Contract with
God. The Reward there stipulated, is
the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and if he does
think fit to *add these Things unto us*, and
to enlarge our Portion, by the Accession of
some

364 *A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor, &c.*

SERM. some external good Things, it is over and
XI. above our covenanted Recompence.

~ BUT whatever the Lot may be of a
righteous Man here on *Earth*, he will be
sure of his Reward in a *better Place*, in
those Regions of endless Bliss and Glory,
where the *blessed Martyr*, whom we this
Day Commemorate, we may charitably
presume, is now adorned with that *Crown
of Life*, which he purchased by his con-
stant *Perseverance unto Death*.



SERMON XII.



SERMON XII.

A Sermon on the General Fast,
before the *House of Commons*,
March 28, 1711.



AMOS iv. 10.

— *your young Men have I slain
with the Sword; and have taken
away your Horses, and I have
made the Stink of your Camps
to come up unto your Nostrils:
Yet have ye not returned unto
me, saith the Lord.*



HE Almighty, as the great Go-
vernour of the World, and Dis-
poser of Events, has various
Methods of keeping Mankind
in subjection to him, and making them
sensible

SERM.
XII.

SERM. sensible of his Power and Dominion over

XII. them. He has very gentle and very severe Dispensations, with which he visits them by turns; and though he is much more delighted, when he can govern by the former, yet he sometimes finds it necessary to have recourse to the latter: Nor does it always happen, that even his heaviest Judgments are sufficient for the Reformation of wicked Men: As we find him complaining several Times in this Chapter of my Text; where he enumerates the various Judgments he had successively sent down on the House of *Israel*, and all without effect. *I have given you, says he, Cleanness of Teeth in all your Cities, and want of Bread in all your Places — I have with-holden the Rain from you, so that two or three Cities wandered unto one City to drink Water — I have smitten you with Blasting and Mildew, when your Gardens, and your Vineyards, and your Fig-Trees and your Olive-Trees increased, the Palmer Worm devoured them — I have sent among you the Pestilence, after the Manner of Egypt, your young Men have I slain with the Sword, &c. But all these Severities,*

ties; it seems, were too little to reclaim S E R M.
 them; for we still have it repeated, after XII.
 the Relation of every Judgment; *yet have*
ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

AND I wish this were not too much
 the Case of our own Country. We too
 have had Experience of many of God's
 dreadful Visitations, though far less than
 our Iniquities deserved, and with a large
 Allay of unmerited Blessings; *yet have we*
not returned unto the Lord; nor are we
 made the better by all our Sufferings. The
 several national Calamities mentioned in
 this Chapter, with which the great Sove-
 reign of the Universe chastises an ungod-
 ly People, have all had their Turns of
 raging in this Land: But that which now
 lies heaviest on us, and the farther Cala-
 mities whereof we are now met to de-
 precate, by the solemn Humiliation of our
 selves before God, and the religious Exer-
 cises of this Day, is the Misery of a de-
 vouring War; which however unavoid-
 ably entred into, and successfully carried
 on, has been unexpectedly long and tedi-
 ous, bloody and expensive; in which some
 Millions of Lives have been sacrificed,

SERM. and many Millions of Treasure been consumed, and all without producing the expected Fruit of so much Hazard and Contention, *viz.* a joyful Rest and Tranquillity, the Security of our Religion, and the undisturbed Possession of our civil Rights and Liberties.

XII.

BUT that we may improve the Sense of our publick Sufferings, and of the Transgressions for which we suffer, to the Design of this Day's penitential Submission; that we may humble our selves under the afflicting Hand of God: That we may confess all this to be the *Lord's doing*; and be alarmed with the just Apprehensions of what he will farther do, if we continue to provoke him: That the Almighty may not complain of us, as formerly of the *Jews*, that though he has *slain our young Men with the Sword*, and permitted other Evils to befall us, yet *would we not return unto him*; give me leave, from the Words of the Text, and Occasion of the Day, to insist on the following Points.

First, THAT the *Sword* is an Instrument of God's Vengeance; and that
all

before the House of Commons. 369

all Wars and Fightings are a Judgment sent from him, to chastise the Iniquity of both the contending Parties.

SERM. XII.

Secondly, THAT to remain incorrigible under God's Judgments; is the highest Degree of Provocation; and the certain Way to inevitable Destruction. And;

Thirdly, How far in Fact we have; and in what Manner we ought to *return unto the Lord our God*; that so we may appease his Wrath; avert his Judgments, and recommend ourselves to his Favour and Protection.

First, That the *Sword* is an Instrument of God's Vengeance; and that all Wars and Fightings are a Judgment sent from him, to chastise the Iniquity of both the contending Parties.

To confirm which Assertion, and make you sensible, that War is both an Evil, and an Evil of God's sending, I might appeal

370 *A Sermon on the General Fast,*

SERM. to a Multitude of Texts, where he threat-

XII. ens it in his Anger, and joins it with other

Plagues, the most dreadful that can befall a Nation, where he assumes to himself the Title of *Lord of Hosts*, and even glories in the Appellation of *Shaddai*, or the Destroyer, *I kill*, says he, *and I make alive*, *I wound and I heal*, Deut. xxxii. 39. And a little after, *If I whet my glittering Sword, and my Hand take hold on Judgment, I will render Vengeance to mine Enemies, and will reward them that hate me.* We read in the xivth of *Ezekiel*, that the *Sword* is one of those which he calls his *four sore Judgments*: It was one Branch of the miserable Option proposed to *David*, when he was to be punished for numbering the People; and we find he did not think it the least of the three Evils, but made Choice of the Pestilence it self, as a less formidable Ill.

WILL it here be alledged, that to *flee three Months before our Enemies, whilst they pursue us*, which was to have been *David's* Case; or more generally, that to be crossed with continual Disappointments, to miscarry in all our warlike Enterprizes, and

and fall at last under the Power of a pre-
vailing Adversary, might indeed be ac-
counted a heavy Judgment: But that a
prosperous and successful War, such as this
we are engaged in, attended with repeat-
ed Victories, and blessed with many providential
Events, may better afford Matter
of Joy and Triumph, than of Humiliation
and Repentance, and fill us with the As-
surance, that God is pleased with the Jus-
tice of our Cause, and that we are
the People whom he delights to ho-
nour?

IF this should be objected in Bar to the
solemn Devotions, the religious Austeri-
ties, the affectionate Contrition, the smit-
ting Reflections on our own Unworthiness,
and the Justness of God's Displeasure,
which this Day of Penance and Mortifi-
cation calls for; may I not be allowed (in
order to promote these Holy Duties, and
for the subduing in ourselves that Pride
and Elation of Mind, which might other-
wise obstruct them) to turn the dark Side
of our Affairs, and represent a more uncom-
fortable Prospect; without being thought
to undervalue the Goodness of our divine

SERM. Benefactor, or insensible of those accumu-

XII. lated Favours, which in the Riches of his
Mercy he has showered down upon us?
For which may his glorious Name be ever
magnified and exalted.

FOR still it must be remembred, that
however the continued Succession of so
many Blessings and Deliverances may ad-
minister just Grounds of Wonder and De-
light, of Love and Gratitude, of Hope
and Trust; it gives us none of Confidence
and Presumption. How well soever the
Almighty may be affected to a righteous
Cause, he will be no Friend to the unright-
eous Espousers of it. Whatever past Advan-
tages we have gained, they are so far only
an Earnest and Pledge of farther Mercies,
as they are thankfully received, and usefully
improved; but our Exaltation will only
contribute to our heavier Fall, if we grow
giddy with our Heighth, and look not to
the Arm that raised us. We have put on
our Armour with good Success, but it is
not yet Time to put it off: The inciden-
tal Scenes of the Tragedy of War have
been generally in our Favour, but who
can judge what the Catastrophe will be?
The

The main Issue of it is still precarious and depending, beyond the Reach of our Fore-
fight to discover, or our Power to deter-
mine. God only can give Success or Dis-
appointment to our Counsels and Arms :
He only knows how the great contested
Point will be finally decided ; whether
Europe shall be free, or subjected to the
arbitrary Will of one aspiring Monarch ;
whether the true Religion, or Popish Su-
perstition shall be established in these
Realms,

IN the mean time, is not our very Un-
certainty, in a Matter of so much Conse-
quence, our Fears of a Miscarriage, our
Reflections on the Instability of worldly
Blessings, our Apprehensions that the
Course of Success may possibly turn against
us, and the Triumphs of so many Years
be blasted by the Event of one unprospe-
rous Day ? Is not even this, I say, enough
to convince us, that War is a heavy Judg-
ment ? That even a victorious and success-
ful War carries some Marks of the Divine
Displeasure, has its Share of Punishment
and Suffering, and is a just Occasion of
humbling ourselves in the most lowly and

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SERM. reverent Manner before Almighty God;
XII. of flying to him for Pardon and Protec-
 tion, under the modestest Sense of our
 Weakness, and deepest Conviction of our
 Guilt.

BUT if to the Uneasiness of such an
 anxious and doubtful State, we add the un-
 avoidable Calamities with which all War
 is necessarily attended ; if we reflect on
 the Confusion and Disorder, the Waste
 and Desolation, the Injustice, Cruelty and
 Oppression, the undistinguished Violence
 to innocent Friends and nocent Foes, du-
 ring the Heat and Hurry of a Battle or a
 Pursuit, with many other affrightning Cir-
 cumstances that might be named ; this
 must farther convince us, how far such a
 State is from being at any Time eligible,
 how unlovely and uninviting under its most
 promising and favourable Aspect ; and what
 a Pain it must be to a Breast that has any
 generous Sense of Pity, even to conquer
 at the Expence of so much Misery of his
 Fellow-Creatures.

I FORBEAR to aggravate this black and
 dismal Scene, by representing the Cruel-
 ties in cold Blood, with other licentious
 Outrages

Outrages and Excesses, committed not only without, but against Command, by those *Sons of Violence*, whom no Rule or Order can restrain. I am speaking only of a regular Oppression, and disciplined Barbarity, such as is warranted by the Law of Arms, and is, I confess, in some Degree necessary toward the successful Prosecution of a War: But may we not therefore infer from that very unhappy Necessity, which obliges us to be the Instruments of so much Mischief, that War, in its best and most wished for Event, is still a very dreadful Judgment? To which, by the Way, 'tis a very poor Alleviation, to reflect that our Enemies have suffered much more than we.

BUT let us take now another View, and turn from the Evils we make others bear, to those we endure our selves. Is it not enough to damp our Pride, and make us ashamed of our confident Boasting, when we consider at how dear a Rate the Subject of our Boasting has been purchased? How our young Men have been slain with the Sword, for which there are too many *Widows to make Lamentation*; how

SERM.
XII.

SERM. how many have been made fatherless, and
 XII. how many childless ; how our Poor have
 increased, our Commerce decayed ; how
 largely we have been drained of our Riches,
 and which is much more precious, of our
 Blood, in the Course of this expensive and
 destructive War.

CONSIDER what a Value is set by the
 Laws of this Land, as well as by the Laws
 of God, on every single Life ; how strict
 an Inquisition is made for the Blood of the
 meanest Subject, when spilt even by the
 greatest ; with how unanimous a Voice,
 and warm an Indignation, Justice is de-
 manded against any Murtherer ? And yet
 how many of these valuable Lives are sa-
 crificed in every Battle, or without a Bat-
 tle, by the Fatigues and Casualties of an
 Expedition or Campaign ; and that Con-
 sideration will be a farther Proof, that we
 have all this Time been under God's visit-
 ing and afflicting Hand, even while we
 have been conquering.

IT is by his Blessing indeed that we
 prevail in the Contention with our Ene-
 mies ; but it is his Anger that leaves us
 any Enemies to contend with. We must
 ascribe

ascribe it to his Favour and Loving-kind-
ness, that our Right has been hitherto so
happily vindicated and asserted ; but to his
fatherly Correction and Reproof, that our
Right is still disputed, and that we have
Occasion to vindicate it by Force of Arms.

SERM.
XII.
~~~~~

WE are, in short, but the Instruments  
of his Wrath, in all our Strife and Con-  
tention, and do but serve his Purposes on  
one another. He suffers Kingdoms to  
waste and weaken each other, that so he  
may avenge himself upon both, in Pro-  
portion to their several Provocations ; which  
is the Substance of my first Assertion. I  
am now to shew, in the

*Second Place,* THAT to remain incor-  
rigible under God's Judgments, is  
the highest Degree of Provocation,  
and the certain Way to inevitable  
Ruin.

THERE is, indeed, no greater Sign of a  
confirmed Wickedness, and perfect Obdu-  
ration, than to be insensible under the Rod  
of Affliction ; not to be improved or bet-  
tered by such awakening Admonitions, to  
be



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SERM. be so far from *turning to him that smiteth*  
 XII. *us, Isa. ix. 13. as, on the contrary, to*  
 ♪ *spurn at the Arm that lashes us, and defy*  
*his Power while we smart under it.*

LET us hear how he resents such a careless and stubborn Behaviour, *Isa. xxii. 12, 13, 14. And in that Day, says the Prophet (it was a Day when the Persians, by the Divine Permission, had invaded Judea, as he often suffered the barbarous Nations to do, in order to chastise his People for their Idolatry, and oblige them to cry out to him for Deliverance) in that Day did the Lord God of Hosts call to Weeping and to Mourning, and to Baldness, and to girding with Sackcloth. And behold Joy and Gladness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. And it was revealed in mine Ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.*

WHEN Men have the Confidence to despise and trifle with God's monitory Correction, instead of profiting by such salutary Discipline, they must be lost and  
 dead

dead to all Goodness, and have no Spark of SERM.  
Divine Life remaining in them. XII.

WE see in Lethargick and Paralytick Fits, when all the vital Functions are at a Stand, that oftentimes the Patient is recovered by rougher Methods, and Operations seemingly cruel, when tender and gentle ones would have had no Effect. But when the violent Remedies too have been applied in vain, when the senseless Trunk, though flashed and scarified, scorched and blistered, exerts not the least imperfect Act of Life; it is then given over as lost and hopeless, and we conclude, when once it can feel no Pain, that it is past all other Feeling.

Now this is the Case of the Soul as well as Body, for even that has its *Lethargies* too. It is sometimes so buried in Sense, so immersed and plunged in Sottishness and Brutality, that all its Faculties are suspended, it becomes quite stupid and void of Reflection, and scarce appears to be an active Principle. While the Soul is thus dormant and secure (as it often is in a fortunate and flourishing Condition) it seems good to the All-wise Providence  
to

SERM. to rouse and quicken it by some sharp

XII. Affliction. And if a Man is Proof against

*this severer Lesson, if he is deaf, not only to the still Voice of God, but also to the louder and more audible Proclamations of his Will, if Misery cannot humble, nor Correction tame him; his Conscience thenceforward is, as the Apostle speaks, seared with a hot Iron, it becomes so dead and insensible, that no good Impression can be made on it. No Exhortations, no Rebukes, no Threats, no Promises, can excite, or shame, or allure, or terrify a Mind so steeled, a Heart so unrelenting. Such was the State of those whom the Prophet Jeremy complains of. Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive Correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return, Jer. v. 3.*

BUT of this we may be assured, that such as will not be amended by God's fatherly Correction, he will afterwards correct more sharply in his Anger; and however resolute and manly some may think it is to out-brave their Sufferings, and dare the Divine Vengeance;



Vengeance, it is far wiser and better to SERM.  
relent in the Beginning, without tempting XII.  
him too far, or abiding the Extremity of  
his Wrath.

If indeed there were nothing more in God's Punishment, than standing the Shock of it for a few Moments, or a short limited Time, and one were sure to hear of it no more: If a Man could have any Security, that as soon as he had weathered out one Storm, he should for the future be Proof against all Adversity, and that Almighty Vengeance could not reach him; in this Case, a daring and inflexible Temper would not be quite so unaccountable. Had the Almighty no more Curses in Store, than the Patriarch had Blessings, who when one had been stolen from him, was not Master of a second, or none at least that was equal to the first, it might be some Encouragement to wicked Men to trifle with his Fury, when they perceived that he was once disarmed, and had already discharged his single Bolt. But the Artillery of Heaven is never to be exhausted. Though his Judgments are gone forth, and his Hand is heavy in another Place,

SERM. Place, he is not less at Leisure to regard

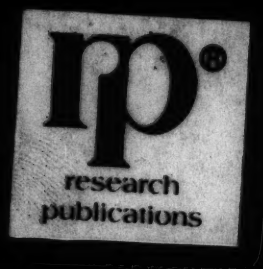
XII.  our Actions here, nor less able to chastise us for them. He can smite us in the midst of our Security, when we think of no farther Danger, and, with *Agag*, are saying within our selves: *Surely the Bitterness of Death is past.*

How much wiser is it then to prevent the Evil by an early Virtue, than to buy our Experience at so dear a Price? How much more rational to fly betimes from these Courses, which, when once we begin to smart soundly for them, we shall wish we had never taken? Or if we are tempted, by a foolish Curiosity, to try whether God will punish us or no; yet at least, methinks a small Portion of Misery might be sufficient to convince us that he is in earnest, without provoking him to the uttermost.

THERE is nothing more absurd and ridiculous, than one of a haughty and refractory Spirit, contending with a superior Strength. It is worth one's observing, how long he will refuse to submit, after he is visibly worsted, how long he will hide his Pain, dissemble his Losses, and

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to what a Degree he will suffer, before he will own he feels: And, after all, how he is forced to comply on the same or worse Conditions than he might have had before; whilst a long Resistance makes the Shame of a late Submission the more remarkable, and adds to the Glory of the Conqueror: SERM.  
XII.

HAD it not been much happier for *Pharaoh*, if after he had essayed two or three of God's Judgments, he had fulfilled his Command, and let *Israel* go; rather than have brought on himself and Country ten dreadful Plagues, and in the End the Loss of all their First-born; and, after all, be forced to permit that which he had so obstinately refused; and not only to permit their Departure, but even court those to be gone, whom he had before detained by Violence.

If the Prodigal Son had managed after the same Rate, when his extravagant Folly had brought him to a very unhappy Condition; when he was reduced so low, as to envy not only his Father's Servants their Bread, but the very Swine their Husks: If after his Fortune was exhausted, his

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SERM. high Spirit had remained, he might have  
 XII. ended his Days in Shame and Beggary, in  
 a foreign Country, unpitied, unrelieved.

BUT he had the Grace, you know, to make a better Use of his Sufferings; for though his Submission too was of the latest, yet it was not too late to be effectual. He wisely saw, that a haughty Stomach and Stiffness in the Wrong, was by no Means consistent with a famishing Condition; and that the seeming Shame of acknowledging his Offences, and returning to his Duty, was abundantly preferable to the Pain of Starving. And you see the happy Consequence of his Recantation; how by humbling himself he became exalted, how by confessing his Unworthiness he was accounted the more worthy, and whilst he was contented to be admitted as a Servant, was received with Joy as a Favourite Son. And this naturally leads me to the

*Third Thing proposed*; which was, To consider, how far, in Fact, we have, and in what Manner we ought to return unto the Lord our God, that so we







we may appease his Wrath, avert his SERM.  
Judgments, and recommend ourselves XII.  
to his Favour and Protection.

AND here I shall not need to prove, that we have all, without Exception, gone astray from the Rules of Holy Living, prescribed us by our heavenly Lord and Father; and are no more worthy to be called his Sons or Servants, till we return to our Duty and Allegiance again. I leave it to every Man's Conscience to reflect, how far he, for his own Part, has deviated from the Laws of God, at what Distance he stands from him, and to make his Approaches to him again by such regular and wary Steps, as the Discipline of true Repentance calls for; with a contrite Heart and humble Spirit, covered with Shame and Confusion, and melted with Godly Sorrow; with an earnest Desire of Pardon and Reconciliation, with an undissembled Confession of his sinful Frailties, with holy Vows and solemn *Resolutions of Amendment*, with an affectionate Love of God, and universal Charity toward his Neighbour.



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SERM. I SHALL not enlarge on the Corruption  
 XII. of the Times, and reigning Vices of the  
 ~~~~~ Age; nor draw an uncomfortable and disgraceful Parallel between the *nominal Christians* in these, and the *real* ones in the primitive Days. It would be an Undertaking of too large a Compass for the Remainder of this Discourse, to describe in such Colours as they deserve, the shameful Riot and Debauchery, the Decay of our Piety and Improvement of our Luxury, the Abuse of God's Mercies, and Contempt of his Ordinances, and the Swarms of Heresies and pestilential Errors, that have infested this Nation for some past Years with an uncontrouled Licentiousness. But there is the less Need of my enlarging on this Head, since all Endeavours of this Kind are happily superseded by the religious Care and godly Zeal of our most *gracious Sovereign*, who has recommended the Enquiry into the Growth of these Errors, and the Causes of it, to the *Clergy in Convocation assembled*; and we may reasonably promise ourselves, from the good Disposition of all Parts of the *Ligislature*, that when once the Cause is fully laid open,




open, this growing and contagious Evil SERM.
will not be long without a proper Re- XII.
medy. 

I have but just hinted at these Corruptions in Faith and Practice, as fit to be reformed, and without the Reformation of which we must hope for no Blessing on our Endeavours, nor that any Thing we take in Hand will prosper ; but as they are Subjects of Discourse never out of Season, and very frequently and copiously insisted on, I have forbore to expatiate on them.

AND I the rather chuse to contract my self as to these Points, because there is one ill Quality not so watchfully observed, more rarely condemned, less heartily detested, and which has so peculiar a Relation to the Business of War, that I cannot but think it a proper Matter for the Humiliation of this Day ; and that is, the Want of a *publick Spirit*, and *disinterested Love* of our Country. Had such a *Spirit* prevailed among us, had we all been as zealously concerned for the common Welfare, as for our particular Interests and Advantages, how much more effectually might we have prosecuted our just Rights, how
over C c 3 much

SERM. much sooner had the bloody Tragedy been

XII.

ended, and a joyful Peace and Tranquillity been restored? Had we strove with a generous Contention, who should be most active and forward in the Service of his Country, who should contribute most largely to its Preservation and Support, and bear the greatest Share of the common Burden, instead of artful Management and shifting Contrivance to bear either none at all, or as little as was possible; if, I say, we had taken this Course, we might have gloried in the Name of *Patriots* indeed, we might, in all human Probability, have long since enjoyed the Fruits of our hearty and vigorous Endeavours, in a Freedom from any farther Hazard or Expence, and our very Liberality itself might have proved the truest Parsimony.

BUT has there not, in this Respect, been a Defect of Justice, as well as Generosity? Has not the Publick been shamefully defrauded by with-holding legal Dues, and grasping at illegal Profits? Are not such Frauds and Depredations too commonly extenuated, and represented as no Injury to any one, as if that Government could
have



have no Property of its own, to which we SERM.
all owe the Security of ours ? XII.

BUT whatever has been practised of this Kind, we have Reason to hope, that the wise Determinations of this *Honourable House*, which has taken such effectual Care that the Publick shall both do Justice and receive it; will produce for the Time to come, if not a better *Spirit* among us, a freer from *Self-Interest* and *Guile*, and the little Arts of Cunning and Deceit; yet at least a Forbearance of all notorious Fraud and exorbitant Injustice, and give a Check to that greedy and rapacious Humour which makes Men delight in the Miseries of their Country, if they can but find their own private Account in the Calamities it endures, and raise themselves upon its Ruins.

BUT as we hope for God's Blessing on our publick or private Undertakings, let us purge ourselves from these and all other Iniquities, and let them no longer be named among us; let our *Love be without Dissimulation* to God, our Neighbour and our Country; let us reflect on the Mercies we have received with Thankfulness, and on the Judgments we have felt, with Humi-

SERM. lity and Submission; and let both together encline us ardently to love, and reverently to fear him, who is the Author of all the Good, and Permitter of all the Ill that happens to us.

XII.

ABOVE all things, let us beware of a stubborn and contumacious *Spirit*, and such an unsubdued Obstinacy, as is the very Temper of the Devils, who still audaciously resist their Maker, though they know all Resistance to be in vain; whilst they are gnashing and howling they are still in Rebellion, they re-iterate their Crimes in the midst of their Torture, and whilst they roar for blaspheming, they roar out new Blasphemies.

BUT oh! may none of us ever act or suffer like them; let the Judgments and Calamities which God in his great Wisdom is pleased to allot us, (and in that Number let us reckon the Fury of a wasting War) work their intended Operation on us, by driving us to sincere Repentance, obliging us to purify our Consciences from dead Works to serve the living God. This it concerns us to do, both in point of Interest and Duty, as private Christians: But there

there is a farther Consideration that ought to affect us, as we are Members of a Body Politick, if we have any of that publick Spirit, or Love for the Community we belong to, which I was just now recommending; to which we can do no better or more substantial Service, than by helping to reform it, by using our best Endeavours, that no *accursed Thing* may be found among us, that no prevailing Vices or scandalous Immoralities, may disgrace the Purity of our Profession: That Piety, Truth and Justice, may be the distinguishing Characters of our People; that God's Service may be our Delight, and his Glory our greatest Aim,

AND in Order to so good and desirable a Work, as the reforming Mens Manners, and promoting God's Worship, I cannot but adore his Goodness, that has inspired our *Gracious Queen* and *her Parliament* at this Time with so noble and religious a Thought, as the causing to be erected in these Cities a sufficient Number of Places of Divine Worship, the Want of which has so long retarded the Progress of *true Reformation*, and been so manifest a Hindrance

SERM.
XII.

SERM. *drance to Religion in general, and the*

XII. *Church of England in particular.*



BUT how must it encrease our Wonder and our Joy, when we reflect, that so large and comprehensive a Design should be formed at so unlikely a Juncture, and yet meet with so general Encouragement, that these Churches, like the Walls and second Temple of Jerusalem, should be *built even in troublous Times*, Dan. ix. 25. when the extraordinary Exigencies of the Government, and the large Supplies required for the publick Service, would have given a much fairer Pretence for Opposition, than on other Occasions has been admitted. It has been no uncommon Stratagem, in those who were secretly Ill-wishers to any good Design which they durst not openly condemn, to lose it by Delay, and artfully contrive that no Time might be found for the Execution of it, by always objecting the Unseasonableness of the Time present, which treacherous Reasoning, has been the Ruin of many an honest and well-concerted Project. But this happy Instance will convince us, that no Time is unreasonable or improper for doing





doing Good ; and that where there is an **SERM.**
earnest Disposition, there will soon be a **XII.**
working according to that Disposition. A
willing Mind and hearty Resolution, far
from being staggered at little Obstacles and
Impediments, will make its way through
great ones. May the Author of all good
Counsels give his Blessing to this, and di-
rect it to the Advancement of his Glory,
and the Propagation of his Religion : May
he give us all the Grace of true Repen-
tance, and fit us for the Inheritance of his
heavenly Kingdom : May he continue to
bless Her Majesty's Arms with Victory
and Success, preserve Her Sacred Person
from secret Attempts and open Violence ;
and in his own good Time, may he *cause*
War to cease in all the World, and bring
Destructions to a perpetual End.

To him, with the Son and Holy Ghost,
&c.

SERMON XIII.



S E R M O N XIII.

Anniversary Sermon for the Charity
Schools at St. Sepulchres, May
24, 1711.



MATTH. xi. 25.

*At that Time Jesus answered and
said, I thank thee, O Father,
Lord of Heaven and Earth, be-
cause thou hast hid these Things
from the Wise and Prudent, and
hast revealed them unto Babes.*

SERM.
XIII.



HERE is no visible Connexion
between these Words, and what
passed immediately before ; nor
is it clearly evident, or gene-
rally agreed, what it was that gave Occa-
sion to our Lord, thus to *rejoice in Spirit,*
and



and to break out into these Expressions of Praise and Thankfulness to his heavenly Lord and Father. He is said to answer, though there is nothing in the whole Chapter, but that Question propounded to him in the Beginning of it, by two of *John's* Disciples, that needs an Answer, or will admit of one; so that we can understand no more by that Phrase, but his continuing to speak, and proceeding in his Discourse; or else replying upon himself with Reference to some Subject, whereon he had been secretly ruminating in his Mind.

SERM.

XIII.

THE Words that have the greatest Affinity with those now before us of any in the Chapter, are what we read in the End of the 5th Verse: *The Poor have the Gospel preached unto them.* Which *Poor* in that Verse, seems plainly to design the same Persons with *Babes* in this: Those Things which were *hid from the Wise and Prudent, and revealed unto Babes*, we may naturally interpret of the glad Tidings of that Gospel, which *the Poor had preached unto them*: The Poverty in one Place, and the Infancy in the other, are of the same Extent,

SERM. Extent, both have an allegorical Meaning

XIII. besides the plain and literal One, and imply not only a Meanness of Fortune and Depression as to outward Circumstances, but a Poverty of Spirit and Dejectedness of Mind; not only the Weakness and Ignorance, but the artless and undisguised Simplicity, the Openness, Candor, and Submission of a little Child: Such a State, in short, as had both the greatest Need of spiritual Instruction, and was best qualified to receive it. These were the *Poor* to whom the *Gospel* was preached; these the *Babes*, to whom *those Things* were thought fit to be revealed, which were hid from the worldly wise.

THE only Difference between the two Passages seems to be, that what our Saviour had urged in the 5th Verse, as a Proof of his own Mission, and an Argument that he was the true Messiah, he makes another Use of at this 25th Verse, where (after a pretty long Digression, containing a Character of St. John Baptist, and a Re-proof to those uncorrigible, unbelieving Cities, in which he had chiefly wrought his Miracles,) he takes Occasion from the high





high Satisfaction he found in the Success SERM.
and Efficacy of his Doctrine, to improve XIII.

the same Reflexion on his converting the
Poor, and Illumination of the Dark and
ignorant, by which he had established his
own Credit, to the Exaltation of his Fa-
ther's Name. *I thank thee, O Father,*
Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou
hast hid these Things from the Wise and
Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.

FROM which Words, whether so con-
nected or not with the above-mentioned
Passage, toward the Beginning of the Chap-
ter, yet at least as fit to be compared with
it, as concurring in the same Design, and
establishing the same important Truth, we
may not improperly take a Handle for
considering the following Points.

First, That the revealing the Mysteries
of Christianity to those who were
destitute of all saving Knowledge,
but were spiritually Poor, and Babes
in Understanding, was both a proper
Evidence of our Saviour's divine Mis-
sion, and a just Matter of Praise to
Almighty God.

Secondly,

SERM.

XIII.

Secondly, THAT it is a very becoming Instance of Christian Obedience, a laudable Imitation of our blessed Lord, and highly conducing to God's Glory, for us, in our several Capacities, to propagate that Revelation to those who are yet Babes, and who have not yet been initiated, or not so fully as they ought, in the Mysteries of the Gospel.

Thirdly, AND this will easily lead me in the *Third Place* to apply the Substance of what shall be advanced under those two Heads, to the Religious and Christian Undertaking that occasions this goodly Appearance of *Poor*, who have the Gospel preached unto them; and of *Babes*, to whom those Truths of Christianity are revealed, in so edifying a Manner, which, through their own Default, are hid from the carnally Wise and Prudent.

First, I SHALL endeavour to convince you, that the revealing the Mysteries of Christianity



Christianity to those who were destitute of SERM.
all saving Knowledge, but were spiritually XIII.
poor, and *Babes* in Understanding, was
both a proper Evidence of our Savi-
our's divine Mission, and a just Matter of
Praise to Almighty God.

AMONG the many other Advantages
that were to accrue to Mankind upon the
coming of the Messiah, among the di-
stinguishing Marks and Characters that
were given of him by the Prophets, it
was foretold by *Isaiah*, xxix. 19. *The*
Meek also shall increase their Joy in the
Lord, and the Poor among Men shall re-
joyce in the Holy One of Israel. And
again, lxi. 1. *The Lord hath anointed me*
to proclaim glad Tidings to the Poor. And
the Royal Psalmist, when in the 10th
Verse of the lxxviiiith *Psalms*, he had magnifi-
ed God for having of *his Goodness prepared*
for the Poor, proceeds to shew us in the
following Verse, what Sort of Preparation
he had made for them, viz. a Provision of
spiritual Food and Nourishment proper
for the Soul, an Abundance of Doctrine
and Plenty of the Word, in Opposition to
that *Famine of the Word*, which is threat-

SERM. ened in the Prophecy of *Amos*, as one of
 XIII. the greatest Curses that can befall a People.

*The Lord gave the Word, great was the
 Company of Preachers, of them that publish-
 ed it, Psal. lxxviii. 11. And elsewhere,
 Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings
 hast thou ordained Strength, Psal. viii. 2.*

IN Allusion to which Predictions, our
 Saviour, in the Chapter of the Text, in-
 sists on his preaching the Gospel to the
 Poor, as one of the principal Marks by
 which he was to be known. For when
John the Baptist had sent two of his Dis-
 ciples to enquire of him, whether he were
 the Christ or not? *Art thou He that should
 come, or do we look for another?* He re-
 turned this short but significant Answer by
 them; *Go and tell John again those Things
 which ye do see and hear; the Blind receive
 their Sight, the Lame walk, the Lepers are
 cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are
 raised up, and the Poor have the Gospel
 preached unto them.*

As much as to say, Consider what you
 have either seen me do, or heard attested
 by credible Witnesses; compare my Actions
 with those ascribed by the Prophets to the
 Messiah,

Messiah, observe exactly how all Circumstances agree, and you will not need any Declaration of mine to certify you whether I am the Christ or not. And this indeed was the most proper and convincing Argument he could have used ; for the bare averring such a Thing, without Proof, the pretending to a divine Mission, without shewing his Credentials, would have given little Satisfaction, and scarce have procured him many Profelytes.

BUT when he appeals to their own Senses, when he desires them but to make a true Report of those Things which they had seen and heard, and leaves them to judge of his Authority by his Actions, he took the most effectual Way to remove all Scruples, and to leave them without Excuse, if they did not believe in him. Those who would never have given him any Credit on his own Word and Affeuration, were much better convinced, when he bid them believe *for the very Work's Sake*. When they beheld the maimed and defective Organs of Sense and Motion, which were lost beyond the Help of Physick, or Recovery of Art, restored to their former

D d 2

Use,

SERM. Use, without any other Application than
XIII. that of a few Words ; when they beheld
dead Bodies restored to Life, and dying
ones to Health ; how the poor and calamitous of the Earth were invited to be Partakers of the gracious Terms of the Gospel Covenant ; and those who had no Possessions on Earth, were taught to expect a Kingdom in Heaven : All which were most visible Tokens and Indications of the true Messiah ; there was no opposing such powerful Conviction, nor withstanding the Force of such irresistible Evidence.

BUT it may possibly be objected, That the last of these Tokens, which is most to our present Purpose, had Nothing miraculous in it, and was therefore a less distinguishing Note of his Divinity than any of the others. Men may be apt to imagine, that there needed no supernatural Aid or divine Impulse to enable him to execute the Office of a Preacher, and instruct the ignorant Multitude in the Rules of plain Morality, for which he might easily be qualified by a Readiness of Invention, and Fluency of Speech, without a
Commission

Commission from on High, and by less SERM.
than a Divine Power. XIII.

BUT yet if we respect the amazing Efficacy and Success of the Doctrine he delivered, and the Influence it had on the Lives of those that heard it; how convincingly he silenced the Gain-saying, how graciously he enlightened the Ignorant, how happily he reformed the Vicious, with what admirable Dexterity he avoided the insidious Questions of the Captious and Insnaring; if we consider how all who heard him, even when a Child, *were amazed at his Understanding and Answers:* How the Officers who were sent to apprehend him, had not Power to execute their Commission, but with Astonishment confessed, that *never Man spake like that Man.* If we consider the peculiar Worth and Excellence of those Rules which he enjoined, of what exceeding Benefit and Importance they are to Mankind, and how much they tend to the improving human Nature, and raising it to the highest Degree of Perfection; it will sufficiently appear, that in the Discharge of this humble and condescending Office, he acted by as

SERM. divine a Power, and gave as convincing

XIII. Proofs of his heavenly Original, as in any of the others ; that he was no less considerable in that Mount on which he preached, than in that on which he was transfigured ; when he conversed with Publicans and Sinners, than when he talked with *Moses* and *Elias* : when he familiarly stiled himself the *Son of Man*, than when he was proclaimed the *Son of God* from Heaven ; when he converted those who were dead in their Sins, and raised in them a Newness of Life, than when, in a literal Sense, he raised from the Dead the departed *Lazarus*, and the Widow's Son.

EVEN the Obscurity and low Estate of those who first received the Publication, which by some of the Enemies of the Cross, has been urged as an Argument against the Credit of the Publisher, does, on the contrary, more undeniably establish and confirm it. Thus it behoved Christ to converse, such *lost Sheep* was he to *seek and save*, such *Sinners* did he *come to call to Repentance*, to reduce such Wanderers into the Way, to be a *Light* to those who thus *sat in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death*,

Death, and to guide their Feet into the SERM
XIII.
Way of Peace.

HAD he taken any other Measures in propagating his Religion; had he apply'd himself to the great and leading Men of the Age and Nation where he lived; had he courted the Powers that were then in Being, to countenance his Design; had he sought to establish it by the Help of a confederate and united Faction, and the powerful Influence of a prevailing Party, (which human Prudence would have suggested to him, as the most likely Methods of succeeding, if he had not been conscious that it was able to make its Way by the Force of its own native Conviction, though in the Hands of the weakest Instruments) he would not have corresponded so exactly with the Description of the Messiah by the Prophets, and we should have wanted one powerful Argument for the Truth of Christianity.

AND as his proceeding in this Manner was a proper Evidence of his being sent from Heaven, so was it likewise a just Matter of Praise to Almighty God. The faithful Execution of his Will, and Ac-

SERM. accomplishment of his Purposes, by such

XIII. Methods, and under such Regulations as he has thought fit to prescribe, is always highly acceptable and well-pleasing to him, and was never more acceptable than in the several Steps that were taken by the Redeemer of Mankind, toward the effecting that Redemption. If at the first Formation of the World he survey'd the several Parts of his Workmanship, and with Pleasure pronounced, *that they were good*, i. e. conformable to the Model in his eternal Mind, and adorned with such Kinds and Degrees of Perfection, as he had allotted to the several Species that composed it; with how much greater Satisfaction did he survey the new Creation, the Renovation of fallen Man, his Regeneration *by Water and the holy Ghost*, the sanctifying and cleansing him, making in him *a new Heart and a new Spirit*, instructed in the Knowledge of God's Will, enclined to the Observance of it, and set right in the Way that leads to eternal Life!

SUCH a glorious and happy Change he resolved to make, and to effect it by the Mediation of his ever-blessed Son: And
that

that Son who was all Obedience, whose SERM.
 Meat and Drink it was to perform his Fa- XIII.
 ther's Will, and to cause it to be per-
 formed by others, undertook the gracious
 Work, and not only executed the main
 Substance of his Commission, but com-
 plied with it in the Manner and all the
 Circumstances. And particularly with re-
 gard to the Persons to whom the Truths
 of the Gospel were first to be declared,
 who were first to be *begotten again unto a*
lively Hope; to be *renewed in their inward*
Man, and in the Spirit of their Mind:
 He applied himself, as directed, not to
 the Great and Powerful, not to the Wise
 and Learned, but to those of low Condi-
 tion and ordinary Capacities; that when
 the Cause should appear to thrive so well,
 and spread so far, under the Management of
 such weak and despicable Agents; the
 Power by which they acted, and the Truths
 which they proclaimed, might be confes-
 sed to be of God, and not of Man, that
 all Men might ascribe the Glory to him
 who, *destroyeth the Wisdom of the Wise,*
and bringeth to nothing the Understanding
of the Prudent; 1 Cor. i. 19. and for that
 Reason

SERM. Reason hath, not called many wise Men
 XIII. *after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble; but hath chosen the foolish Things of the World to confound the Wise, and the weak Things of the World to confound the Things that are mighty. ver. 26, 27.*

It was his pleasing Reflexion on the display of God's Glory in accomplishing his Designs by the most unlikely Means, that vented it self in those Expressions of Joy we meet with in my Text; *I thank thee, O Father, &c.*

THE proper Matter of his rejoicing was not, we may be sure, the Concealment of the Gospel Truths from any Body. He who was, *the true Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World: Job. i. 19. Who would have all to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4.* could not be delighted with any one's Continuance in Error. The Rich and Knowing were to have their Share of the Revelation likewise, but the Poor and Ignorant were the Channel through which it was to be conveyed to them. This happy Order and Oeconomy of dispensing the Gospel, this *raising the Poor out of the Mire, and setting him above the Princes of the*

the People; this filling the Hungry with good Things, and sending the Rich empty away, till those being first replenished, should invite them to partake of their spiritual Sustenance : This, I say, was the direct Ground of his Exultation, not that these Things were *totally* hid from the wise and prudent, but that they were *so long* hid till after they had been revealed to Babes. I am now to shew in the

SERM.
XIII.


Second Place, That it is a very becoming Instance of Christian Obedience, a laudable Imitation of our blessed Lord, and highly conducing to God's Glory, for us, in our several Capacities, to propagate that Revelation to those who are still Babes, and who have not yet been initiated, or not so fully as they ought, in the Mysteries of the Gospel.

THE great Author of our Religion having imparted to his Church such saving and useful Truths, as were sufficient to direct us in the Way to Happiness, and appointed a Succession of Pastors and Teachers, with an Authority derivable to others throughout all Ages, to preserve the Knowledge of those sacred Truths, to spread

SERM. spread and diffuse them through all Nations, and publish to the whole World the glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation; to declare that Method of Reconciliation to God, and of attaining eternal Life, which he had declared to them; having done thus much, I say, and finished the Work he had to do on Earth, he was taken from them into Heaven, but left them with this Promise, that he would still be spiritually present with them *to the End of the World*; that he would send them *another Comforter*, that should lead them into all Truth, and enable them to lead others, and with an express Charge, that they should make it their Endeavour so to do.

THUS did our blessed Redeemer lay the Foundation of an universal Church, with sufficient Encouragement to the whole Race of Mankind to shelter themselves within its Pale, and become Converts to Christianity, and with a Command to those who are already admitted, who have been, *Heb. vi. 4, 5. enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come*, with a Command, I say, to them,

to

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to be zealous in imparting that Light to SERM.
others, which has been so freely commu- XIII.
nicated to them; to demonstrate the Sin-
cerity of that Love of God and their
Neighbour, which, if they are true Mem-
bers of the Christian Church, must neces-
sarily possess their Hearts, by shewing a
tender Regard for the Souls of Men; by
revealing those Treasures of hidden Wis-
dom, of which they have been hitherto
unhappily deprived; by labouring with all
Diligence and Care, with all Humility
and Condescension, with all Earnestness
and Affection, to rectify their Mistakes,
to remove their Prejudices, and give them
as clear an Understanding as may be of the
Things that belong to their Happiness and
Salvation.

If all who have professed the Name of
Christ, had been acted by such a Spirit
as this; if every one would have applied
to himself that Exhortation of our Saviour
to St. Peter, *When thou art converted,*
strengthen thy Brethren: Had every one
made it a Matter of Conscience, not bare-
ly to be a Christian himself, but to con-
tribute in the best Manner he was able to
the

SERM. the making others so; if such a Spirit as
 XIII. this, I say, had all along prevailed among
 the Members of the Church, the dark
 Corners of the Earth might long since
 have been illuminated, Christendom might
 have had the same Bounds with the habi-
 table Globe; not only the Sound of the
 Gospel might have been heard, but its
 Doctrines received in all Lands, and all
*the Ends of the World might have seen and
 enjoyed the Salvation of our God.*

BUT how backward soever the Gene-
 rality of Believers may have been in this
 Respect, or how short soever they may
 have fallen of what might justly be ex-
 pected from them, this makes nothing at
 all against the Rule, their Duty lies plain
 before them, they are expressly command-
 ed to *follow after the Things wherewith
 one may edify another; to consider one ano-
 ther, to provoke unto Love and to good
 Works; not to seek their own Profit, but
 the Profit of many, that they may be saved;
 to have Compassion on their Brethren, and
 save them, plucking them [as Firebrands]
 out of the Fire.*

FROM such imminent Danger we have
 all been preserved our selves; thus mer-
 cifully

cifully has our gracious Redeemer delivered SERM.
us from the Brink of Ruin, released us XIII.
from the most galling Yoke and slavish 
Bondage, and brought us from the Power
of Satan unto God. And can we refuse
to copy him in those good Works, so far
as our Capacity extends, of which we our
selves have been the happy Objects? Shall
we, on whom the Light of the Gospel has
shone in so glorious a Manner, eclipse and
contract the Beams of it, and not suffer
them to dart into those obscure Re-
gions, where the *Prince of this World* still
rules with a despotick Sway, blinding his
Vassals with the grossest Superstitions, and
corrupting them with the foulest Immora-
lities? Do we think our own Happiness
would be the less, if we should contribute
to the Increase of theirs? Are we jealous
of Rivals in God's Favour, or apprehensive
that the Kingdom of Heaven would not
be large enough to receive us, if too many
should be saved? Would we shelter our
own Indevotion and Profaneness, and
Neglect of Duty, under the greater Enor-
mities of those unenlightened Wretches,
and imagine we shall be reputed less cul-
pable

SERM. pable for being *bad Christians*, because

XIII. there are some who are *meer Heathens*?

Or is it nothing else but a supine Negligence and lazy Inadvertence; a Contempt of those miserable People, who are destitute of Christian Knowledge, and not thinking them worth our Notice, that makes the glorious Design of communicating the Gospel to them go on so heavily, and meet with so small an Encouragement? Alas! how different a Notion have we of the Value of Souls from that of our blessed Lord? Or what must have become of us, if he had set so low a Price on ours, as we on theirs? How justly may he reproach us for such uncharitable Neglect, as the Master in the Parable did the unmerciful Servant; *Shouldest not thou also have had Compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had Pity on thee?* Mat. xviii. How ill do we follow the Direction he has given us a little after my Text: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart?* How unjustly do we *hide our Light under a Bushel*, and *take away that Key of Knowledge*, that should unlock the Mysteries of the Gospel to those from whom they are as yet hidden! How little

little do we consult the Glory of God, SERM.
which ought to be the chief End of all XIII.
our Actions, by deferring to make known
the Wonders of his Providence, and his
infinite Love to Man, in so graciously con-
triving the Means of his Restauration to
Grace and Favour; where it must, and
will be one Day made manifest, whether
we will be the Instruments of it, or no:
As if we were possessed with a more than
Jewish Selfishness, and resolved to confine
that Redemption to ourselves, which he
intended for the universal Benefit of Man-
kind!

I AM making these Expostulations among
those, who, I know, are sensible of the
Justness of them, and who have long been
labouring to prevent the unhappy Occasion
that has been given for them, and not
without a good Degree of Success; but
the Concurrence of all Hands and Hearts
is requisite toward the accomplishing a
Work of so large a Compass, and the
Want of that is what I sincerely lament;
but I am willing to believe that *Her Ma-
jesty's* Gracious Letter, requiring a Collec-
tion to be made for the carrying on that
VOL. III. E e godly

SERM. godly Undertaking, and appointed to be
 XIII. read in all our Churches the next Lord's
 Day; will very much encrease the Number of those who make the propagating of Christian Knowledge their peculiar Care, and that the Exhortations to that Purpose will have a good Effect; and therefore I will not too far anticipate the Subject.

I HAVE a Charity of a nearer and more immediate Concern at present to recommend to you, if any farther Recommendation be requisite of those, whose innocent Look, whose modest Garb, whose unaffected Plainness, whose orderly Procession, whose towardly Manners and regular Behaviour, whose ready Submission to Discipline, and happy Improvement under it, do so engagingly plead for them, and carry such a winning Persuasion.

Thirdly, For this was the *Third* Thing I proposed, *viz.* to apply the Substance of what has been advanced under the Two former Heads, to the religious and Christian Undertaking that occasions this goodly Appearance of *Poor*, who *have the Gospel preached unto them*; and of *Babes*, to whom

whom those Truths of Christianity are SERM.
revealed, which are hid from the wordly XIII.
wise. 

AND sure if the revealing the Mysteries of the Gospel to those who, in any Sense, were Babes, was at first a Demonstration of the *Truth* of Christianity; the revealing it now with such Success, to these who are literally so, is a Demonstration of the *Power* of it. Such a well-laid Foundation in the Principles of the Christian Faith, so forward a Proficiency in Children of such tender Years; such a *Readiness* to give an *Answer* to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them, is no inconsiderable Proof that God is with us of a Truth, and that such as are meek and tractable among us, *them will he teach his Way.*

If the bringing his Purposes to pass by the most helpless Agents and weakest Instruments, be conducive to God's Glory, and an Argument of his providential Care and Direction of human Affairs, what Agents so helpless as these, what Instruments so weak? and yet, what *Strength* has he ordained? What *Praise* has he per-
E e 2 *fect*

SERM. *fect'd out of the Mouth of these Babes?*

XIII. What an Air of primitive Simplicity do we see reviving? How blessed a Resemblance of the Beginnings of the Gospel-Age in the several Parts of her Majesty's Dominions? How laudable a Correspondence has been settled and maintained among the distant Promoters of this good Work, who carry on a religious Commerce, and negotiate for the Good of Souls? How pleasant is it to observe, that from the Time it was first undertaken, it has never intermitted or stood still, never cooled upon their Hands, much less has it gone backward, but, as it appears, upon comparing every Year's Account with that of the foregoing, the Number of Schools and Scholars, and the Contributions for maintaining them, have been still growing and encreasing, and the Lord has been continually *adding to the Church such as, we trust, shall be saved?* Thus is that *Grain of Mustard Seed*, which was *cast into the Ground*, become a *great Tree*, and that Tree is in a fair Probability of spreading to a Grove.

AND I will not distrust, but that the delightful Spectacle of this Day, the humble

ble Proceſſion, the decent Appearance, the SERM.
reverent Deportment, and the harmonious XIII
Conſort of thoſe Innocents now before
you, far more affecting than the Solemnities of the gayeſt Triumph, or the fictitious Paſſions of a Theatrical Representation; I will not diſtruſt, I ſay, but that ſo many perſuaſive Arguments, and (if that could add any Weight to a Rhetorick ſo much more cogent) the earneſt Endeavour of the Advocate who is now pleading in their Behalf, will, with God's Bleſſing, touch the Heart of ſome new Benefactor, and open ſome freſh Spring of Bounty to water and reſreſh theſe godly Nurseries, which give us ſo fair a Specimen of the Reformation of Manners in this Age, and I hope in God, will compleat and perfect it in the next at leaſt.

WHEN we obſerve the ſurprizing Pro-
ficiency of theſe Children in the Know-
ledge and Practice of their Duty, to a De-
gree that could ſcarce have been believed,
till it was thus tried; how few in ſo large
a Number have proved remarkably vicious
and incorrigible? How few have wanted
either a Capacity to retain even long Ca-

SERM. techetical Answers, with the Scripture.

XIII. Proofs, or a decent Courage to pronounce them audibly and distinctly in a full Congregation, not even those of the Female Sex? This will convince us, how much the Soul of Man may be improved by good Nurture and Education; and that it is not any Inability or Defect of Nature, (which too often bears the Blame) but Negligence and Sloth, or a wrong Method of Instruction, that makes the Generality of other Children appear with less Advantage.

BLESSED be God! we have many excellent Seminaries of Religion and Learning, where the Children of the better Sort may be well grounded in all useful Knowledge, in all that can adorn this Life, or fit them for a better.

BUT without Disparagement or Injustice to those hopeful Nurseries, I may venture to affirm, that there is no Way of Instruction so generally successful, where there are so few Miscarriages, or so compleatly framed for the breeding up good Christians, as in these Charity-Schools.

THUS

Thus amply has the wise Providence SERM.
of God compensated the Disadvantages of XIII.
the Poor and Indigent, in wanting many
of the Conveniencies of this Life, by a
more abundant Provision for their Happi-
ness in the next. Had they been higher
born, or more richly endowed, they would
have wanted this Manner of Education,
of which those only enjoy the Benefit, who
are low enough to submit to it; where
they have such Advantages *without Money*
and without Price, as the Rich cannot
purchase with it; the Learning which is
given, is generally more edifying to them,
than that which is *sold* to others: Thus
do they become more exalted in Goodness,
by being depressed in Fortune, and their
Poverty is, in Reality, their Prefer-
ment.

LET us thankfully adore the divine
Goodness, that in the midst of an Age
which seemed abandoned to Vice and Ir-
religion, abounding with so much Corrup-
tion, with so many Examples of Profane-
ness and Debauchery, has raised up such a
Spirit of Piety and Charity, and put it
into the Hearts of many worthy Persons

SERM. to combine together for all good Purposes,
 XIII. to form themselves into Societies, to join
 ~~~~~ their united Endeavours, and contribute  
 largely out of the Substance wherewith  
 God hath blessed them, toward the extirpa-  
 ting of Vice and Ignorance, giving a new  
 Turn to the State of Christianity, support-  
 ing and propagating that Religion, of which  
 profane Scoffers and Atheistical Cabals were  
 plotting the Subversion.

THAT he has endued them with Con-  
 stancy and Resolution to persevere in so  
 good a Work, and *not to be weary of Well-*  
*doing*; and enclined them to think no La-  
 bour too great, no Office too mean, that  
 may be serviceable to the Christian Cause;  
 that Persons of good Birth and liberal For-  
 tunes, should submit to be the Overseers  
 of those Poor, who are maintained by their  
 own Charity, that they should make it  
 their Business to look into their little Wants,  
 and become as it were their Stewards  
 and Servants, in Imitation of that lowly  
 and condescending Act of our blessed Sa-  
 viour, when *he washed the Feet of his own*  
*Disciples*, or when he told them, *I am*  
*among you as he that serveth,*

THE



*Charity Schools at St. Sepulchres.* 423

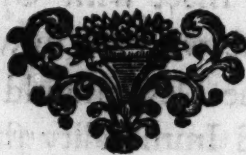
THE many excellent Benefits that arise SERM.  
from this well-placed Charity, to the XIII.  
Children themselves, to Families, to Pa-  
rishes, to the Church and Nation, have  
been often set forth with great Ad-  
vantage, on former Occasions of this  
Nature ; many of which, though at  
first they were but *pious Presages*, have  
been since made good by undeniable Ex-  
perience, as I doubt not but all the rest,  
which there has not yet been Time enough  
to make manifest, will appear to be upon  
farther Trial.

IT has been the peculiar Happiness of  
this Charity, that there have been no Com-  
plaints of any Misapplication of the Funds  
that are destined to this pious Use, which  
are too often alledged against others of a  
publick Nature : No colourable Objection  
of any kind has been made against it, nor  
indeed can it meet with Opposition from  
any, but those who are unwilling that the  
Empire of the Devil should be weakened,  
that Vice and Immorality should lose any  
Ground, and who are the declared Ene-  
mies of God and Goodness.

BUT

SERM. BUT however the God of this World  
 XIII. has blinded the Children of Disobedience,  
 that they will not see, nor understand and  
 be converted; but despising the Treasures  
 of God's Word, and the Light of his holy  
 Gospel, put their Trust in wordly Riches,  
 and value themselves upon their carnal  
 Policy; We thank thee, O Father, Lord of  
 Heaven and Earth, that the Things which  
 are thus hidden, through their own De-  
 fault, from the wise and prudent, (as the  
 World accounts Prudence) thou hast re-  
 vealed unto these Babes. For which, and  
 all other thy Mercies,

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but  
 unto thy Name be the Praise, &c.



SERMON XIV.



# SERMON XIV.

At the opening of the Church of  
St. Mary at Hill, after Repara-  
tion. December 31, 1716.



EXOD. XXV. 2.

*Speak unto the Children of Israel,  
that they bring me an Offering :  
of every Man, that giveth it  
willingly with his Heart, ye shall  
take my Offering.*

**T**HE Purpose for which the Of-  
fering here spoken of, was to  
be given by the Children of  
Israel, was for the building a  
Tabernacle, and providing the sacred Uten-  
sils appertaining to it. The Law was now  
newly



426 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. newly delivered to *Moses*, and there want-

XIV. ed an Ark to be the Repository of the

Two Tables of Stone, whereon it was engraved, and a Tabernacle to be the Repository of that, as also for other religious Uses.

THE People of God were yet in an unsettled State, they had broke loose from their *Egyptian* Bondage, and were on their Way toward the promised Land; but many Difficulties remained to be surmounted, a long Journey to be taken through a Land possessed by Enemies, many Nations to be subdued, many Mutinies to be quelled, much Despondency, backsliding, and forward Disobedience was necessary to be tamed among themselves, as they were a querulous discontented People, and ever prone to Rebellion, before they could arrive at the appointed Place of Rest.

UNDER these Circumstances there was no such Thing to be expected as a fixed Place of Worship; it had been a Scheme altogether unpracticable and unreasonable: To what Purpose indeed should they have projected a Fabrick, which they had no Prospect of staying to employ to its proper Use,

*after Reparation, Dec. 31, 1716.* 427

Use, while they were daily in a travelling SERM.  
Posture, and in constant Expectation of XIV.  
being called away to make some farther  
Progress toward the Land of *Canaan*, per-  
haps before they had well laid the Foun-  
dation, at least before they could finally  
have accomplished such a Structure? Nor  
was the longest Abode they made at any  
one Place during their Forty Years sojourn-  
ing, of such Duration, as to warrant upon  
any rational Grounds, their engaging in so  
difficult and tedious an Undertaking.

BUT yet the Service of their great Cre-  
ator and gracious Benefactor, who had sa-  
ved them with such a mighty Hand, who  
governed and conducted them with such a  
successive Train of Miracles, was not in  
the mean Time to be intermitted. Nay,  
it was highly requisite in order to their  
more devout and regular Celebration of his  
Praise, that he should be worshipped in  
some Place appropriated to himself, and  
separated from profane Uses.

To reconcile which two disagreeing  
Views, it pleased the divine Artificer him-  
self to project for them that moveable  
and portable Edifice, called the Taberna-  
cle,

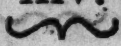
428 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. cle, which journeyed as they did from  
 XIV. Place to Place, wherever they encamped  
 was ready for their Reception, through all  
 their several Stages in the Wilderness:  
 And even after they were possessed of the  
 Land of Promise, continued for some Hun-  
 dreds of Years to answer the same End,  
 even beyond the Days of *David*, till his  
 Son and Successor *Solomon* arose, a Prince  
 that enjoyed a peaceful Reign, and an un-  
 exhausted Affluence of Wealth, which  
 was likewise accompanied with a munifi-  
 cent Spirit, a sincere Devotion, and an  
 earnest Zeal for God's Glory: And *he* was  
 appointed by divine Providence to effect  
 that, which his Father *David*, whose  
 Hands had been too deep in Blood, though  
 he passionately desired it, was not per-  
 mitted to engage in; I mean, to be the  
 Founder of that noble and magnificent  
 Structure the Temple at *Jerusalem*.

BUT till Things should be in a full  
 State of Maturity for the executing so vast  
 a Design, there was a temporary Help  
 provided. The Tabernacle in the mean  
 Time, was to be the Place of Resort for  
 the Performance of religious Duties. The  
 several



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several Materials of which, the Form and SERM.  
Manner of its Structure, and the several XIV.  
Ornaments with which it was embellished,   
are described at large in the Chapter of  
my Text, and those which follow it; and  
at whose Cost it was erected, you will be  
informed from the Words now before us.  
*Speak unto the Children of Israel, says the  
Lord to Moses, that they bring me an Of-  
fering: of every Man that giveth it wil-  
lingly with his Heart, ye shall take my  
Offering.*

THIS Building then, you see, though  
it was equally with the Temple ordered  
and directed by God himself, to whose  
Service it was consecrated, yet was not  
like that carried on at the Expence of any  
single Person: It took not its Rise from  
the pious Liberality of a Royal Founder,  
but from the mutual Benevolence and joint  
Contributions of his religiously affected  
People, of those who brought in such pre-  
scribed Materials, as were proper for its  
Use and Ornament, willingly and with  
their Hearts, without which Condition  
their Oblation was not to be accepted.

How

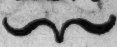
430 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. How very readily they contributed on

XIV. this Occasion, and in what a full Stream  
their Bounty flowed in, we have a very  
convincing Testimony a few Chapters forward, insomuch that the overflowing and redundancy of it was even restrained by an Injunction of *Moses*, upon a Complaint of the Workmen employed, of the too great Abundance. For we read in the 36th Chapter at the 4th and following Verses, that they came away every Man from his Work, and spake unto *Moses*, saying, the People bring much more than enough for the Service of the Work which the Lord commanded to make. And *Moses* gave Commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the Camp, saying, Let neither Man nor Woman make any more Work for the Offering of the Sanctuary. So the People were restrained from bringing. For the Stuff they had was sufficient for all the Work to make it, and too much.

AND now from this Instance before us, of God's requiring his People to build him an House at their common Charge, and the particular Disposition of Mind with which he expects the Encouragers of so good

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good a Work to be affected, the Doctrine SERM.  
I shall raise may be reduced to these Pro- XIV.  
positions, 

*First,* THAT the building, repairing,  
and beautifying Places of publick  
Worship, and paying a decent Re-  
gard to them when built, is a Ser-  
vice with which God is well pleased.  
But

*Secondly,* THAT in this and all other  
good Works, he regards not so much  
the outward Act, as the Sincerity and  
Cheerfulness of the Mind. If we  
hope to recommend our selves to his  
Favour, we must give willingly and  
with all our Heart.

*First,* THAT the building, &c. That  
it was so under the *Jewish* Dispensation,  
not only the Place of Scripture I am now  
discoursing on, but numberless other Places  
in the Old Testament, make it evident  
beyond all Exception. All this is there  
required to be done by God's express Com-  
mand: those who on such Occasions were



432 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. most zealous and reverent, are commend-

XIV. ed and rewarded in the highest Degree, and all Neglecters or Profaners of holy Places are punished in the most exemplary Manner. It would be endless to enumerate particular Passages, and needless indeed to maintain a Point that no Body contradicts. For all do and must allow that, under the Law at least, the Supreme LORD, even that GOD who at the same Time thought fit to declare that he dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, *i. e.* he did not so dwell in them, as to be confined or comprehended in them, for how can that be affirmed of him, whom the utmost Extent of Space cannot comprehend? yet even he, I say, challenges a peculiar Propriety in Places dedicated to his Honour, and often declares his Delight in them, and his residing and being present in them in a peculiar Manner, more eminently than he is present in other Parts of the Universe.

BUT there are those who, admitting all this to be true, while the Mosaical Covenant was in Force, that a Reverence for Places and Things Sacred was at that Time required

required and necessary to be paid, will yet SERM.  
pretend that this was no more than legal XIV.  
Righteousness; that the Case is quite al-  
tered under the Evangelical State, that  
what was then an Act of Duty, is now  
become an Act of Superstition, that Christ  
has set us free from such vain Observances,  
and taken away all such frivolous Distinc-  
tions, that God, who is present every  
where, will accept of our sincere Service  
any where, and that if our Prayers and  
Praises are offered to him with a pure and  
honest Mind, the Oblation is equally well-  
pleasing to him, whether it be made in  
a Church or in a Stable.

BUT I would only ask of those who  
argue in this Manner, why, if the Distinc-  
tion of Place be so silly and superstitious,  
should not the Distinction of Time be so  
too? Why, if one Place be no more sa-  
cred than another, should one Day be  
more sacred than another? Or why should  
they suppose the Almighty to be so tena-  
cious of his Right, as to require One Day  
in Seven to be inviolably kept holy,  
and dedicated entirely to his Service, but  
not One Inch of Space in the whole Com-

434 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. pass of the Globe? Is it not the same God

XIV. who assigns us our Number of Days, and likewise our Portion upon Earth, and may he not challenge at our Hands a Part of the one by the same Rule that he does a Part of the other? As he is present with us in all Places, so is he likewise at all Times; as he can hear us from a Stable as well as from a Church, so can he likewise on a *Saturday* as well as on his own Day.

I CHUSE to make this Reply to the Objection, passing by several other substantial Answers that might be given, because I think it cannot but have a peculiar Weight with those who have been most free in urging the Objection, as it is a reasoning with them from an acknowledged Principle of their own. They are generally (for which I cannot but commend them) very strict Observers of the Sabbath. They are too apt (which is not so commendable) to value themselves as more righteous than their Neighbours, for observing it more nicely and punctually than they. And yet there is no one Circumstance they can urge against Reverence  
due



due to appropriated Places, which will not SERM.  
hold with equal Force against Reverence XIV.  
due to appropriated Times; nothing which  
they can say in Defence of Profaners of  
Churches, which will not justify Sabbath-  
breakers too by Parity of Reason.

WILL they alledge that they do not  
keep the Sabbath as a Relique of Judaism,  
nor for the Reason that *that* People observed  
it, in Commemoration of their Rest from  
*Egyptian* Slavery, but as an Institution an-  
tecedent to the Law of *Moses*, and ap-  
pointed by God as soon as he had finish-  
ed his Work of the Creation, that then  
he sanctified the Seventh Day, and laid  
an eternal Obligation on the whole Race  
of Men to dedicate to him such a Pro-  
portion of their Time? May it not be  
said in this Case likewise, that God put  
in as early a Claim to a Part of the World  
he had made, as of the Time for which  
he made it? For did he not reserve to  
himself the Tree of Knowledge, when he  
gave *Adam* the Dominion of every Thing  
else? And again, upon *his* Expulsion for  
his Disobedience, did he not enclose and  
appropriate to himself the whole Garden

436 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. of *Eden*, and guard it from profane Ap-

XIV. proaches, by placing Cherubims there  
 with a flaming Sword? And to omit many  
 other Instances, did he not at his first Ap-  
 pearance to *Moses* in the Bush, antecedent-  
 ly to his giving him the Law, give him a  
 Caution that the Place whereon he stood,  
 was holy Ground, and require him to ap-  
 proach it with Reverence?

THE sanctifying of Places therefore  
 stands on the same Foot with the sanctify-  
 ing of Time, has the same Antiquity to  
 plead, and is equally founded as to the  
 Fact, on the Authority of sacred Writ,  
 and as to the Reason of it, on the eternal  
 Laws of Truth and Equity.

I readily confess, that the immense and  
 omnipresent God is both able and willing  
 to attend to the Requests of all his Sup-  
 pliants, from whencesoever they are made  
 known unto him. There is no Wilder-  
 ness so solitary, no Cottage so homely, no  
 Dungeon so loathsome, as to be exempted  
 from his Inspection and Regard. He  
 listened to the Complaints of holy *Job*,  
 when he lay groveling on the Dunghill;  
 he hearkened to the Petition of *Daniel*,  
 that

that was made to him from the Den of Lions, and of *Jonah* from the Belly of the Fish. SERM. XIV.

He heareth the Mournings of such as are in Captivity, and of the Children appointed unto Death. The midnight Praises of *Paul* and *Silas* ascended into his Ears from within the Prison Walls, and drew down his Assistance. On such an Occasion, in such an Exigence, the noisome and gloomy Jail was as acceptable an Oratory to him, and appeared in his Eye with as amiable a Lustre, as all the gaudy Decorations of the most magnificent Temple; and the Rattling of Chains was as agreeable Musick, as the Sound of an Organ, or the Chanting of a Choir.

BUT what was it, do we think, that reconciled him to these Addresses of his Servants, when presented to him in so disadvantageous a Manner and with so little of outward Reverence? What engaged him to dispense with external Forms, and suffer his Votaries to approach him with such an Air of Negligence? Was it not the Infirmary, the Disability, the Constraint they were under? Was it not because they were destitute of Means to offer him a more de-



438 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. cent Worship, because he saw that what

XIV. was defective in their Service, was not the

Result of their Choice, but of Necessity?

FOR can we imagine, that any of the holy Persons above-named, would have chose to go into those unseemly Places on Purpose to serve God there, if they had had free Liberty to do it with due Solemnity in his holy Temple? God therefore, who accepteth a Man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not, and who requireth of no Man beyond what he is able to perform, was satisfied with the Intention, instead of the outward Act, for the same Reason that he was satisfied with the poor Widow's Mite, because how mean soever the Offering was in itself, she had done the best in her Power, she had cast in all she had, even all her Living.

THE Almighty is ready to make such reasonable Allowances, not only to single Persons in the Exercise of their private Devotions, where indeed there is less of Form and Ceremony at any Time requisite; but also to Numbers of his faithful People who assemble themselves together for the Invocation

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tion of his Name, and setting forth his **SERM.**  
Praise, when the Exigence of their Affairs **XIV.**  
requires it. 

THE first Converts to the Christian Faith he suffered to meet in upper Rooms, in secret Corners and obscure Recesses, and sometimes, when the Fury of their Persecutors was most implacable, in Woods and Deserts, and Caves of the Earth; and yet even in those clandestine Assemblies he was present with them, approved of their Zeal, and countenanced their godly Communication.

Now although in such a tumultuous State of Things, it was unavoidable but that much of that Regularity would be wanting, that may be observed by a well-established Congregation, yet it was even under those Circumstances, that *St. Paul* gave his Injunction for the doing every Thing decently and in Order, *i. e.* so far as it was possible for them, under their present Discouragements, to observe any Order or Decorum: Even in such Places of Worship as they were then forced to be contented with, he required a reverent Behaviour, and taxes it as a great Profanation to do their common Acts in so sacred

440 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*  
SERM. cred a Place. *What, have ye not Houses,*  
XIV. says he, *to eat and to drink in, or despise*  
*ye the Church of God?*

St. Paul, you see, thought it no Superstition to account one Place more holy than another, whose Words I would recommend to the sober Consideration of those who deride our Consecration of Churches as an idle Ceremony, as useless, and ill-grounded, and derived down to us among the gross Remains of Jewish or Heathenish Antiquity.

It is manifest from this Passage, that as early as the Apostles Days, there were appropriated Places for the Performance of Christian Worship, to which all the Reverence and Regard was required to be paid, which the suffering Estate of the Church would then admit of. And consequently, that when the Rage of Persecution abated, and Christianity came under the Protection of the civil Government, it was a laudable Instance of primitive Zeal, and agreeable at least to the Apostolical Spirit, if we may not call it an Apostolical Rule, to erect commodious Buildings for the Celebration of Divine Service, to consecrate and devote



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vote them, with their Appurtenances, to SERM.  
the sole Use and Property of Almighty XIV,  
God, and to look upon it as a sacrilegious  
and accursed Thing, for any one to unhallow what was so devoted, by prostituting it to common and profane Uses. And lastly, to build them with more Magnificence, and adorn them with more Splendor than private Dwellings, as well to express their awful Sense of the Majesty and Glory of that Being who was to be worshipped there, as to testify their Gratitude to him as a Benefactor, and the Author of all the Blessings they enjoyed, whom they desired to honour with an ample Portion of the Substance he had bestowed on them, and like holy *David*, scorned to make an Offering to the Lord their God, of that which cost them Nothing, or next to Nothing. And the Mention of this naturally leads me to my

*Second Proposition,* That in building of Churches, and all other good Works, God regards not so much the outward Act, as the Sincerity and Cheerfulness of the Mind. If we hope to recommend ourselves

442 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*  
SERM. selves to his Favour, we must give willing-  
XIV. ly and with all our Heart.

'TIS certain no other Action can be de-  
nominated Righteous, or entitle the Per-  
former of it to any Recompense at the  
Hand of God, but that which is done  
with an honest Intention, and prosecuted  
by honest Methods. 'Tis not the bare  
Event, how beneficial soever it may prove,  
that transfers any Merit to the Deed, if  
such Benefit were not the principal Thing  
the Actor had in View. God, we know,  
is able to produce Good out of the greatest  
Evil, he can make the worst Actions sub-  
servient to his Will, and the worst Men  
the Instruments of bringing his Purposes  
to pass. He can defeat the Counsels of  
the Ungodly by suffering them to succeed  
in their Attempts, and cause their very  
Defiance and Opposition to redound to  
his greater Glory; but such an Issue, so  
contrary to their Intention, will be of no  
Avail to them, who thus unwillingly pro-  
mote his Honour.

WHEN the wicked Tempter, for Instance,  
'seduced our first Parents to Disobedience  
and Rebellion, and caused them to forfeit  
that

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that delightful Paradise, where the Almighty SERM.  
had at first instated them ; he did it with XIV.  
a malicious Design of totally ruining both  
them, and all their succeeding Race. And  
at first he seemed to have gained his End,  
the Bait was swallowed, Man did disobey,  
and was cast out of *Eden*. But it pleased  
the Divine Goodness to bring about an  
Event unforeseen and unintended by him ;  
by sending his Son to redeem Mankind  
thus lost and destitute, and to make them  
capable on very easy Conditions, of a glo-  
rious Immortality in Heaven, he did a-  
bundantly compensate the Loss of their  
earthly Paradise, and admit them to a  
much more desirèable State, than they  
would have been entitled to, if they had  
never fallen.

BUT he whose mischievous Project  
ended in this happy Consequence, was so  
far from sharing in the Blessings and Ad-  
vantages, of which he was accidentally  
the Occasion, that if any Aggravation of  
Sorrow, any additional Weight of Misery  
could be heaped on one already adjudged  
to the most exquisite and never ceasing  
Torments ; it must be such to him, to  
find



444 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. find his spiteful Stratagem so crossed, his  
 XIV. Rage so baffled and disappointed, and those  
 hated Creatures whom he hoped to have  
 made as miserable as himself, promoted  
 and advanced by his Designs against them.

THERE is one Case indeed recorded in  
 Scripture, where the Authors of a Good,  
 which was far from their Thought and  
 Intention, were notwithstanding the better  
 for it, and seem to be even rewarded for  
 their wicked Purpose. I mean that of  
*Joseph's* Brethren, who Sold him into a  
 foreign Land, because they grudged him  
 that Place which he possessed in his Fa-  
 ther's Favour, little imagining that this  
 Act of theirs would prove the Oceaſion  
 of recommending him to the Favour of  
 ſo great a King. And yet when he was  
 arrived at the Height of his Power, thoſe  
 very Brethren, who ſo unnaturally fought  
 his Deſtruction, are cherished and ſupport-  
 ed by means of that Credit and Authority,  
 to which they had been the unwilling  
 Inſtruments of raiſing him.

BUT this was a ſingular Caſe, and we  
 may make ſome Judgment of the Reaſon  
 of it, from *Joseph's* Words to them, *Gen.*  
 xlv.

*after Reparation, Dec. 31, 1716.* 445

xlvi. 5. *Now therefore be not grieved, nor* SERM.  
*angry with your selves, that ye sold me hi-* XIV.  
*ther: for God did send me before you, to*  
*preserve Life.* And again, ver. 8. *So now*  
*it was not you that sent me hither, but God.*

The Almighty had a great End of Providence to serve, by suffering that righteous Person to be sent into Captivity, though that does not acquit or absolve from Guilt those human Agents who are concerned in bringing his Purposes to pass: Nor is any such thing implied in that tender Expression of *Joseph*, when he bids them *not be grieved, nor angry with themselves*: He could only forgive them so far as they had offended him, but toward God they were still Offenders, as they had disobeyed his Laws even while they were accomplishing his Designs.

BUT however, his Promise to *Abraham*, that he would multiply his Seed as the Sand, was to be kept inviolable; and these Sellers of their Brother, however criminal in that respect, were the Descendents from his Loins, who were appointed to diffuse his Race through so many different Branches, and therefore  
were

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SERM. were not to be cut off. To which we may

XIV. add, that God was not willing to grieve  
the good Old Man their Father, by visiting the Iniquity upon them; and for his Sake probably, and at the Intercession of their Brother *Joseph*, he dealt mercifully with them, and suffered even their own Cruelty and Falshood to turn to their Temporal Advantage.

BUT as to the taking away their Sin, it certainly conduced less toward it, that they were acquitted by *Joseph*, than that they were condemned by themselves, when they made this Reflexion on their own Guilt, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the Anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not bear, therefore is this Distress come upon us, Gen. xlii. 21.*

SUCH a Compunction and Remorse will be more available to any Sinner, than either the Candour and good Opinion of fallible Men, or the lucky Consequences his Actions may produce, when he acts with quite another Aim. God looks into our Hearts, observes the Motions and Tendencies



*after Reparation, Dec. 31, 1716.* 447.

dencies of *them*, and it is from thence he SERM.  
passes his Judgment on us. XIV.

WE may pray, we may fast, we may give Alms, we may be the Founders of Hospitals, or of Churches, which are pious and commendable Deeds, when accompanied with Purity of Mind, and a sincere Love of God, and of our Neighbour; but if *he* discerns the latent Spring of any such plausible Performances to be Hypocrisy or Ostentation, Pride or Peevishness, a forced Compliance with Custom, a Sense of wordly Shame, or any other corrupt Motive, they will none of them be of any Account in his Sight.

AND to bring the Argument home to ourselves, after a long Discontinuance of Worship in this sacred Place, we are now assembled in it again, for the Performance of divine Offices. It is now become a more convenient and capacious Receptacle for the Living above, and for the Dead beneath, whose last Remains may now continue unmolested; the contrary whereof had hitherto been our Unhappiness and our great Annoyance.

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SERM. WE behold it in a more amiable and

XIV.  inviting Form, not only recovered from that unseemly State, to which Length of Time and frequent Interments had reduced it, but enlivened with many new additional Ornaments, disposed, I hope, to the general Satisfaction, and, which is more material, so as truly to answer the Ends of our repairing hither.

TOWARD the accomplishing such a Work no small Expence was requisite, which has been defrayed partly by a legal Imposition, and in no contemptible Proportion by free and voluntary Contributions. And I trust that no Part of what has been brought in under either Article, has been given grudgingly or with Reluctance, or proceeded from any of those naughty and perverse Motives I just now suggested. In pious as well as charitable Donations God loveth a chearful Giver, as you may judge from those Words in my Text, *of every Man that giveth it willingly with his Heart, ye shall take my Offering.* If it be so given, he owns it, he accepts it, he calls it *his*.

IN short, the Work itself is so com-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
mendable, and the Occasion was so urgent, <sup>XIV.</sup>  
that I think no just or reasonable Excep-  
tion can be taken to it. And that the  
Cost which has been bestowed in adorning  
this House of God, where you all meet  
as Friends, and unite in the same Petiti-  
ons, may never prove the Ground of  
Strife and Animosity among you, let not  
him that has given much censure or revile  
him that has given little, but content  
himself with the tacit Approbation of God  
and his own Conscience, for that which  
with a holy and religious Mind he has  
dedicated to his Service.

AND since you have in general shewn  
so laudable a Zeal in fitting up this House  
of Prayer, may it not rationally be expec-  
ted that you will constantly attend it, and  
not throw away your Charge, by rarely  
appearing in it, and neglecting to assemble  
yourselves together? Can any one find Ease  
or Comfort in his own Mind from this  
Reflection, that he has been instrumental  
in providing a decent and beautiful Church  
for others to frequent, in the same Place  
where it is his own Duty to frequent it as  
much as they?



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SERM. AND to your constant Attendance, let

XIV. me once more exhort you to add a careful Attention and reverent Behaviour when present ; let no unbecoming Posture, no light and trivial Words or Actions be observed among you ; let it not be said that the inanimate Fabrick appears with a more graceful Regularity, and contributes more to the Beauty of Holiness, than you who are the living Church, the Members of Christ's Body. To sum up all, Keep your Foot, watch your Actions, and fix your Thoughts, whenever you enter into this House of GOD.



SERMON, XV.



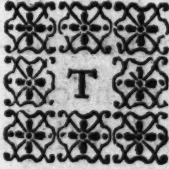
# SERMON XV.

Thanksgiving for the Restoration,  
*May 29, 1660, before the House  
 of Commons, May 29, 1717.*



PSAL. lxxvi. 10.

*Surely the Wrath of Man shall  
 praise thee ; the Remainder of  
 Wrath shalt thou restrain.*


 HIS Psalm is a grateful Com-  
 memoration of some great and  
 signal Deliverance, which the  
*Jews* had obtained from their  
 Enemies ; and most probably was compo-  
 sed on Occasion of the miraculous Defeat  
 of *Sennacherib*, King of *Assyria*, who had  
 invested *Jerusalem* with a formidable Host,  
 G g 3 and

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SERM. and put the Inhabitants into the utmost  
 XV. Consternation. Dispirited by the Number,  
 and awed by the insulting Threats of their  
 Besiegers, they began to despair of all Suc-  
 cour or Relief, and thought of nothing  
 else but Fire and Sword, Ravage and De-  
 solation, and all the fatal Extremities that  
 could be expected from merciless and in-  
 human Conquerors.

IN the midst of this distressed State, it  
 pleased the good Providence of God to  
 send them an unexpected Rescue: The  
 numerous Army that surrounded their  
 Walls, being intimidated by an invisible  
 Power, slaughtered by an invisible Hand,  
 and the powerful Invader himself soon after  
 slain by the Hands of his two Sons in the  
 Temple of his Idol.

IN Memory, I say, of some such De-  
 liverance, and, as learned Interpreters sup-  
 pose, of the Deliverance I have mentioned,  
 was this Psalm composed by *Asaph*: Which,  
 as it all along extols the irresistible Power  
 of God, and the certain Victory of those,  
 on whose Side he engages; so especially  
 this Verse of my Text sets forth the Folly  
 and Madness of contending with God, or  
 such



such whose Cause he is pleased to espouse; SERM.  
since the fiercest Opposition that can be XV.  
made, will redound, in the End, to his  
Glory: Nor can it last any longer, or pre-  
vail any farther, than he himself thinks  
fit to permit it. *Surely the Wrath of Man  
shall praise thee; the Remainder of Wrath  
shalt thou restrain.*

By *Wrath*, we are here to understand  
rebellious Rage, or tyrannical Fury, an  
outrageous hostile Bent of Mind, and  
Thirst after Mischief. By God's *restrain-  
ing* that Wrath, I conceive to be meant,  
his interposing in due Time, cutting short  
the Designs of such wrathful Men, before  
they have completed the intended Mea-  
sure of their Iniquity. And by the *Re-  
mainder* of that Wrath, so much of their  
mischievous Contrivance, as is still unac-  
complished, and which the over-ruling  
Power of God prevents the Execution of.  
Whereas the former Part of the Verse,  
*Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee*,  
seems rather to refer to such of the Devi-  
ces of wicked Men, as had succeeded in  
the Fact, though they were disappointed  
in the End proposed, which contrary to  
G g 4 their

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SERM. their Expectation, was converted to the  
 XV. Glory of God, and to their own Shame  
 and Confusion.

THIS then we may take to be the Im-  
 portance of the whole Verse. ‘ Although  
 ‘ for a while thou sufferest the Sons of  
 ‘ Violence to prosper, to insult thine In-  
 ‘ heritance, to oppress thine Elect, and  
 ‘ to lay Waste thy Dwelling-Place; yet  
 ‘ so far is this seeming Prevalence of theirs  
 ‘ from diminishing thy Honour, that it  
 ‘ only helps to magnify and exalt it; These  
 ‘ are the Instruments of thy Vengeance,  
 ‘ the Scourges wherewith thou correctest  
 ‘ thy beloved Children; these Men do but  
 ‘ execute thy Decrees, whilst they are per-  
 ‘ secuting thy Saints, and whilst they think  
 ‘ they resist thy Will, are then actually  
 ‘ fulfilling it. But this once performed,  
 ‘ if they have any Dregs of Fury left, any  
 ‘ Vengeance of their own to wreak, after  
 ‘ thine is satisfied; thou then interposest  
 ‘ with a high Hand, and stretched-out  
 ‘ Arm to baffle their Devices, and con-  
 ‘ found their Malice, and answerest them,  
 ‘ as thou didst the haughty *Sennacherib*:  
 ‘ *Because thy Rage against me, and thy*  
 ‘ *Tumult*

*Tumult is come up into mine Ears; there- SERM.  
fore will I put my Hook into thy Nose, XV.  
and my Bridle in thy Lips, and I will  
turn thee back by the Way by which thou  
camest, Isa. xxxvii. 29.*

THIS is the most natural and received Interpretation of the Passage now before us. It would take up too much of my Discourse to shew the Reasons for preferring this to other Explications that have been given of the same Text, occasioned by the Latitude of some Phrases in the Original; and I think it the less necessary, because the Doctrine I shall urge will follow from the Words taken under any of those Meanings.

Now, the Things I would infer from this Observation of the Psalmist, are these,

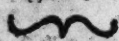
I, THAT Almighty God, for wise and good Reasons, does for some time bear with the Instruments of Evil, and suffers them without Controul to proceed to a very great and surprizing Height of Impiety, But,

II. That



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II. THAT there is a determinate Degree of Wickedness, beyond which the divine Providence will not suffer them to pass, but manifestly interposes to prevent the fatal Consequences that would follow from an unrestrained, unlimited Power, joined with a malicious Will, and brutal Disposition to Mischief. After which I shall proceed,

III. To consider that particular Act of Providence, in the middle of the last Century, which we are now met to commemorate; when though the Wrath of Man had prevailed to an excessive high Degree, so as to murder the best of Kings, and overturn the best of Constitutions; it yet pleased God to restrain the Remainder of that Wrath, by the Restoration of the Royal Family, and settling us again on our ancient Foundations.

*First*, THAT Almighty God, for wise and good Reasons, does for some time  
bear

bear with the Instruments of Evil, and SERM.  
suffers them, without Controul, to proceed XV.  
to a very great and surprizing Height of  
Impiety.

As to the Fact itself, that this Case does frequently happen; that there are daily Instances of dejected Innocence, and triumphant Villany; that the great Oppressors of Mankind do often flourish in Pomp and Splendor; that they enjoy, or seem to enjoy, an Abundance of all outward Comforts, and fatten on the Spoils of the injured and oppressed; that this, I say, is a Case of daily Occurrence, as well the Testimony of Holy Scripture, as the universal Experience of Mankind, and the Complaints on this very Subject as Universal, make it needless for me to prove.

BUT it seems a Thing of more Consequence, and far greater Difficulty, to reconcile these Things with the Justice and Holiness of God, and to account for the Equity of such Dispensations, than to prove that such there are. But this Objection, however plausible and popular, is founded on such apparent Mistakes, that nothing but a latent Infidelity, and a secret Distrust  
of

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SERM. of a future State, where an equal Retri-  
 XV. bution shall be made for all that we have  
 done and suffered here, could induce Men  
 to insist on it, or to urge it as a Defect of  
 Providence.

ONE great Mistake in this Objection is,  
 that it supposes the Miseries of this Life to  
 be the proper Punishment of Vice, and  
 the Pleasures or Honours of it, the Re-  
 ward of Virtue. Whereas, these are not  
 the Benefits we contract for, nor the Wa-  
 ges for which we serve. A Crown of  
 Glory and Immortality will be the un-  
 doubted Portion of such as have Pa-  
 tience to expect it, and who approve  
 themselves God's faithful Servants: As for  
 temporal Prosperity, so much of it as is  
 conducive to that End, or at least not in-  
 consistent with it, may be added to our  
 Portion, by the bountiful Grace and Fa-  
 vour of our supreme Lord: But such  
 Kinds or Degrees of it, as that great Sear-  
 cher of Hearts foresees would prove a Snare  
 to us, and be the Means of beguiling us of  
 a better Inheritance, he most indulgently  
 denies us, and it is our great Privilege to  
 be without them.

NOR



NOR are good Men promised an Ex-SERM.  
emption from worldly Crosses and Mis- XV.  
fortunes : Their Religion and Goodness  
will indeed protect them from some Evils,  
but will expose them to others ; which  
Suffering for Righteousness Sake, however  
grievous in itself, may be made light and  
easy by this Consideration, that it gives  
them a sure Title to a proportionable De-  
gree of Blessedness hereafter. And in the  
mean Time, a firm Reliance on that Bles-  
sing in Reversion, founded on the Testi-  
mony of a good Conscience ; the repeated  
Experience of their own Stedfastness under  
the greatest Pressures, by the Assistance of  
God's Grace ; the habitual Readiness they  
have acquired of withstanding all the  
Temptations that can be offered, either by  
soothing Flattery, or terrifying Force ;  
the Command of their Passions, and Con-  
quest of their ghostly Enemies, are such a  
comfortable Support to the Mind under  
the severest of worldly Evils, that even  
then, when they seem most afflicted and  
distressed, they are full of inward Joy, and  
inexpressible Satisfaction.

AGAIN

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SERM. AGAIN, we have very wrong Notions  
 XV. of the Attributes of God, if we imagine  
 that either his Holiness or his Justice suffer  
 the least Diminution by those promiscuous  
 Events that befall the Righteous and the  
 Wicked. As to the former, what greater  
 Argument can be given of it, than that he  
 has so strictly forbidden whatsoever is con-  
 trary to it, and so solemnly declared, that  
*without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.*

It is true, he could, if he had pleased,  
 have prevented the Evil he forbids, and  
 have enforced his verbal Prohibitions by  
 actual Restraints. He could have tied us  
 up from Vice by the Chains of invincible  
 Necessity, and have dragged us up to  
 Heaven by the Cords of a blind Fatality.  
 But how then should we have served the  
 great End of his Providence, which was  
 to bestow a Heavenly Kingdom on those,  
 who by a constant Perseverance in Virtue,  
 should render themselves (through the  
 Mercies of Christ) proper Objects of it?  
 Whereas, if there were no Vice in the  
 World, there could be no such Thing as  
 Virtue: In the Pursuit whereof, if it were  
 not our Choice that directed us, but our  
 Fate

Fate that led us, we might with just as SERM.  
much Reason expect a Reward for eating XV.  
when we are hungry, drinking when we  
are thirsty, or performing any other na-  
tural Action, as for being honest, chaste,  
or temperate.

BUT Man had his Portion assigned him  
on very different Terms : He was made a  
free Agent ; he was endued with rational  
Powers, and an elective Faculty : He was  
required and enabled to glorify his Maker,  
on certain Conditions stipulated between  
his Creator and him : He lives here in a  
State of Trial and Probation, invited and  
called upon to obey, by the strongest Ob-  
ligations both of Interest and Duty, but  
tempted to disobey by outward Objects  
and inward Lusts, and not incapable of  
yielding to the Force of such Temptations.  
God has set before him Life and Death,  
Good and Evil ; he has made him sen-  
sible what will be the Consequence of ei-  
ther Way of Acting ; and after many gra-  
cious Calls and Fatherly Admonitions to  
make a wise Choice, leaves both Ways  
open, and him to the Liberty of that  
Course, to which his own Discretion, thus  
prepared



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SERM. prepared, thus byassed and influenced to  
 XV. the better and happier Choice, shall guide  
 him.

THIS is the Way of God's dealing with Mankind ; and what Pretence can we take from such a Conduct, to arraign his Purity, or tax him as a Lover and Encourager of Vice. Not to hinder a Thing when we can, and to approve it, are far from being equivalent Terms : There may be many Reasons, even in human Conduct, why we chuse to bear with that which we condemn : And so there are in the Divine. God makes a strict Proof of the Sincerity of his Servants, that those who are faithful may be made manifest, that their Integrity may shine out with a distinguishing Lustre : He tries us like Silver, and hopes to find us as pure. He gives us Opportunities of offending him, which he wishes we may never take. He is far from desiring the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn and be saved ; and in order thereto, he has encouraged, commanded, besought, nay even inclined us, and only does not necessitate us to be good ; and consequently, his barely permitting

permitting that Impiety, which he so manifestly hates, can never be construed as an Approbation of it. SERM.  
XV.

SINCE then God may bear with Sin and sinful Men, without being a Favourer of either; how far, or to what Degree he may bear with them, he sure himself is the most proper Judge. The greatest Irregularities that can prevail in the World, are no more a Reflection on his Holiness, than the least, and the Self-same Reasons will account for both: Some Monsters of an unusual Size may be allowed of in the Moral, as well as in the Natural World, and there may be Giants in Iniquity, as well as in Stature.

NOR is God any more to be charged with the Want of Justice, than of Purity. As for all the unequal Dispensations of Blessings and Afflictions we complain of, and the little Proportion they bear to the several Demerits of Men; this is a much better Argument that there must be a God, who will judge the World, than that there is none who governs it. The divine Justice is indeed concerned, that the good and evil Actions of Men may,

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SERM. sooner or later, meet with a suitable Re-

XV. compense: But whether in this Life, or the next, or in both; infinite, unerring Wisdom can best direct. Why he should not always do it in this, or at least, not just at that Time, and in that Manner we would have him, the following Reasons may be offered, which I shall but just mention, and forbear to enlarge on them.

BEFORE we presume then to murmur on this Score, and complain that we are hardly dealt with, we ought seriously to consider: That whatever Afflictions the best Men suffer, 'tis far less than they deserve: That happy is their Case, who have their Portion of Evil allotted them in this Life: That every Thing the World reputes an Evil, is not so in Reality: That if God should visibly interpose to restrain every Act of Injustice, he must work continual Miracles: That the temporal Interests of good and bad Men are so twisted and linked together, that the one cannot suffer any remarkable Calamity, without involving the other in a considerable Share of it: That if it had been the constant Method of Providence, to punish every Offence,



Offence, by sending some immediate tem- SERM.  
poral Judgment on the Offender; the XV.

Race of Men would have been but of short Continuance, and the World had long since been again unpeopled: That if every Fact were to meet with its Reward, as soon as it was committed, it would leave no Room for Faith in Blessings or Punishments to come: Nay, such a Proceeding would almost as necessarily over-rule the Will of Man, and determine it one Way, as if he had no Liberty of Election at all. All which considered, I think, we may very fairly and reasonably conclude, that it is not without wise and good Reasons, that Almighty GOD does for some time bear with the Instruments of Evil, and suffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and surprizing Height of Impiety: which was my first Proposition. But, What will farther qualify the seeming Hardships, and effectually convince us that there is a *Reward for the Righteous, and a GOD that judgeth the Earth*; I come now in the

*Second Place* to shew, That there is a determinate degree of Wickedness, beyond which

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SERM. divine Providence will not suffer Men to  
 XV. pass, but manifestly interposes to prevent  
 the fatal Extremities that would follow from  
 an unrestrained, unlimited Power, joined  
 with a malicious Will, and brutal Disposition to Mischief.

I DO not affirm, that this Interposition of God to restrain enormous Wickedness does ordinarily appear by miraculous Effects, and supernatural Operations. Not but that he has reserved to himself a right of overruling second Causes, and diverting Nature from its settled Course: He has not made it so far his Substitute, as not to be able to resume the Power into his own Hands, whenever he sees a just Occasion. When the Exigence of Affairs requires it, when mighty Mischiefs call for no common Aid, when all the usual Remedies fail, and all the Foundations of the Earth are out of Course; he then supersedes the Commission of Nature, rules by a special Providence, and by stupendous Instances of his Power convinces the World that a superior Agent is at Work. He writes his Judgments in such legible Characters, that all Men who

see

see them shall say, *This hath God done, for they shall perceive that it is his Work.* SERM:  
XV.

THE whole sacred History abounds with remarkable Instances of his miraculous Power, both in preserving and destroying. Nor have later Ages been without the Experience of some Events, the immediate Author of which must be confessedly more than human. But this is very rare, and not the usual Way in which he chuses to exert his restraining Power, and to curb the Extravagance of lawless Oppression. He can compass his Ends as effectually by inferior Agents, and make us the Instruments of executing his Judgments on one another. He is the supreme Lord of Nature, and of every Power belonging to it: He can command the Assistance both of free and necessary Agents, and by an imperceptible Influence dispose and put into Motion those subordinate Causes, whose Concurrence will best accomplish any Purpose which he is determined to bring to pass.

BUT it may be asked, How shall we distinguish these providential Appointments from the ordinary Occurrences that befall



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SERM. us? By what Rule must we judge, *when*  
 XV. the Hand of God is in any Event, and  
 when it is a Matter of common Course? Must we be guided in this Case meerly by the Success? Must we look upon those as most favoured by GOD, who are most fortunate and thriving, and ascribe the Advantages they enjoy to GOD's peculiar Interposel in their Behalf? This is a Pretension indeed which has been often made, as well by the Enemies as Friends of GOD, and by none more than the Authors of that Confusion with which this Nation was so long distracted, and to which the Deliverance of this Day put a happy and a glorious End. They succeeded in their base and bloody Attempts, which emboldened them to style the most wicked and detestable of their Actions, *the blessed Work*, and *the Lord's Work*; and while they seemed to ascribe to him the Praise, they entitled him to the Guilt of all they had been doing.

BUT to answer the Enquiry, 'Tis not the Success of any Event, 'tis not a train of lucky Accidents, but the Righteousness of the Cause, and Excellency of the End  
 which

which is to be served by any great Delive- SERM.  
rance, that can encourage us to believe it XV.  
is sent from God. He is a God of Jus-  
tice, and of purer Eyes than to behold  
Iniquity with Approbation: He is a God  
of Peace and Order, and not of Discord  
and Confusion. Whatever Dispensations  
are agreeable to the former of these, are  
worthy the divine Being; and such as he  
delights to be called the Author of: But  
whatsoever tends to produce the contrary  
Effects, though he permits, though he  
connives at, though he bears with it for  
a Season, for Reasons mentioned under the  
foregoing Head; yet is so far from his Doing,  
or from being warranted by his Authority,  
that in his own due Time he will effectually reverse it.

LET us not think, when his Providence  
winks, that it is unobserving, but persuade  
ourselves that it is a close, though silent  
Observer of human Actions, and treasures  
up Wrath, though it forbears to strike;  
till roused at last by daring Impiety, and  
provoked by outrageous Violence, the  
Lord awakes as one out of Sleep, and puts  
his Enemies to a perpetual Shame. We

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SERM. may rest assured that every Thing is beautiful in its Season, and that God can direct the Actions of wicked, as well as of good Men to his own Glory. The Lord hath made all Things for himself, yea even the wicked for the Day of Evil.

WHATEVER Power the Instruments of Ill have, their Commission still is limited, and they have their Bounds set them, which they cannot pass. The Devil had Inclination enough, at first, to have afflicted *Job* in his Person, as well as in his Fortune and Relations, but that he was withheld by the express Command of God: *Behold, all that be hath is in thy Power, only upon himself put not forth thy Hand.* And as willing was he, upon a farther Trial, wherein his Commission was enlarged, to have removed out of the World such a professed Enemy of the Powers of Darkness, if he had not been under such another Prohibition. *Behold, he is in thy Hand, but save his Life.*

AND as God manifestly abridges the Power of the Wicked, after they have served his Ends; so he sometimes lays invisible



visible Restraints upon the Will: As he SERM.  
baffles the Rage of some, so he softens that XV.  
of others, and takes from them the very  
Disposition to do Evil. A remarkable In-  
stance whereof we have in the Case of *St.*  
*Paul*, who at first was a Blasphemer, and  
a Persecutor, and injurious, a Confederate  
with the Murderers of *St. Stephen*, and one  
that consented to his Death: He made  
Havock of the Church, and entred into  
every House, haling Men and Women,  
and committing them to Prison. And thus  
far the Almighty thought fit to bear with  
him, as well knowing that all this Wrath  
and Fierceness would turn to his Praise.  
But when he yet breathed out Threatnings  
and Slaughter, when not contented with  
what he had done at *Jerusalem*, he was  
going to *Damascus* with the like cruel In-  
tention; this was the Remainder of his  
Wrath, and this was happily restrained by  
his wonderful Conversion.

As bad as the World is, if the great  
Sovereign of it did not sometimes interpose  
to set Things right, it would be much worse:

And

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SERM. And if Men would but reflect on the Evils

XV. he prevents, as well as those he bears with, they would not be so forward to speak and think injuriously of his Providence. But that *we* may be possessed with juster Notions, and look back with a grateful Remembrance on the great Deliverance he formerly wrought for us, let us in the

*Third Place* consider that particular Act of Providence, in the middle of the last Century, which we are now met to commemorate; when, though the Wrath of Man had prevailed to an excessive Degree, so as to murder the best of Kings, and over-turn the best of Constitutions; yet it pleased God to restrain the Remainder of that Wrath, by restoring the Royal Family, and settling us again on our ancient Foundations.

WHEN it seemed good to the divine Wisdom, to restore the Body Politick to a perfect Soundness, to recover it from that low and languishing Condition, to which its severe and reiterated Convulsions had reduced it, to heal up those Wounds which for so many Years had been kept bleeding,  
and

and to put an End to that long and dismal SERM.  
Train of Miseries, in which our own Wick- XV.  
edness had involved us. When God was  
pleased, as at the first Formation of the  
World, to bring forth Light out of Dark-  
ness, and Order out of Confusion : And  
that too by such unlikely and unpromising  
Instruments, by working so sudden and sur-  
prizing a Change in the Hearts of some,  
who had been the Authors of many Mis-  
chiefs, to whom much of the Ill that had  
been done might be imputed, and who,  
but a very little Time before, seemed ra-  
ther to be contriving a Prolongation and  
Encrease of the Nation's Calamities, if  
greater they could have been ; as to make  
them the Authors, under him, of so glo-  
rious a Deliverance, of settling the King-  
dom in a perfect Tranquillity, uniting the  
divided Interests and Factions of Men, who  
before were in the utmost Distraction be-  
tween their many Lords and their various  
Forms of Government, freeing them from  
the worst Consequence of habitual Sin, the  
almost inevitable Necessity of sinning on,  
and making it their Safety, where it was  
always



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SERM. always their Duty to render their Allegiance.  
XV.

AND such was the Case, when our late injured Sovereign was so unanimously brought back to his rightful Possessions, which, through a Succession of so many Years, had been detained from him, by the Avarice and Ambition, the Violence and Iniquity of his Father's Murderers. When the Hearts of his Subjects were turned to him, as one Man, notwithstanding they had been so long alienated; and though they had been accustomed, after the Example of their seditious Rulers, and more seditious Teachers, to think and speak of him, not only without Reverence and common Decency, but in the vilest Terms of Abhorrence and Reproach.

WHEN the good old Establishment, both in Church and State, was so peaceably introduced, after so long a Disuse and Interruption; and the People, who had run through so many Changes both of Religion and Government, were so generally disposed to say of the old one, that there was none like it; They remembered then with a sensible Regret for their past Follies,  
how

how dearly they had paid for their giddy SERM.  
Curiosity, and wanton Desire to alter a XV.  
safe and happy Constitution: How they  
had shaken off the imaginary Yoke both  
of Monarchy and Prelacy, and never till  
then were real Slaves: How they had seized  
on the Possessions of both; and when  
they had done so, like other Robbers,  
quarrelled among themselves about dividing  
the Booty: How they had been deluded  
by false Representations of their Christian  
Liberty, and taught to undervalue Ordinances,  
the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's  
Supper not excepted, the Use of which  
had been intermitted to a scandalous Degree;  
with what a misguided Zeal they had lent  
a Hand to the pulling down the strong  
Holds of what they called Ecclesiastical  
Tyranny, and destroyed all Discipline  
and Jurisdiction in the Church; and  
when that was done, how miserably they  
were sometimes confounded by the Want  
of any Discipline at all: How heavily at  
other Times they groaned under the  
Severity of a much more rigorous and  
imposing Church-Government, than that  
which they had discarded: How they, who  
had joined

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SERM. joined in a Cry of Persecution against the  
 XV. Bishops, when they came afterward to be  
 divided among themselves, as they severally happened to have their Turns of prevailing, persecuted one another with greater Heat, and treated each other with less Indulgence, than they had even complained of in the Times of their regular Governors.

THEY saw how fatally they had been misled by the noisy Clamour, and plausible Pretences of some turbulent and unruly Men, who complained loudly of those Grievances they meant to make heavier, and expressed a tender Concern for their Liberties, when all they aimed at, was more effectually to enslave them.

AND surely there is no Bondage so irksome, no Chains that feel so weighty, or gall so sorely, as those which are imposed by one's Equals or Inferiors; which was the Case in those rebellious Times, when the vilest of the People had thrust themselves into the highest Stations, and, with a full Swing of Violence and Oppression, lorded it over their Superiors. The Liberties and Properties of their Fellow-Subjects were  
 arbitrarily



arbitrarily invaded, without any Method SERM.  
of Redress: Nay, the sure Consequence of XV.  
seeking a Redress of their Grievances was,   
to be more heavily aggrieved for seeking it:  
Justice was then decided by the military  
Sword, and all civil Power was at an End,  
or nothing at least remained, but the Mock-  
Appearance of it.

THESE, with many more insupportable  
Calamities, were the Result of those causeless  
Jealousies and Discontents, which embroi-  
led the Reign of the most gracious and  
indulgent Prince that ever filled a Throne,  
the most tender of his People's Rights  
and Liberties, the farthest from pursuing  
those arbitrary and destructive Measures,  
in which his unhappy Son, by the Advice  
of treacherous Counsellors, was so deeply  
engaged, as to make a subsequent Change  
of the Government necessary and unavoid-  
able. But no such threatening Projects to  
Religion and Liberty were formed under  
the Father's Government; His People  
were, or might have been, the happiest  
Subjects upon Earth, could they have un-  
derstood or valued their own Happiness.  
But a Spirit of Faction and Discord was gone  
forth;

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SERM. forth; they were quarrellsome and uneasy,

XV. they knew not why; something they still  
 wanted, they knew not what; they were  
 angry and dissatisfied, and resolved to be  
 so, in spite of the most condescending Me-  
 thods that could be taken for their Satis-  
 faction. Artful and designing Men knew  
 how to work upon their Discontents, and  
 fill them with groundless Fears, till they  
 had raised such a Ferment as broke out  
 into Treason and actual Rebellion, and  
 from thence proceeded to the Murder of  
 the Sovereign, and Extirpation of the  
 Royal Family: Thus far did God suffer  
 their Wrath to prevail to their own Hurt,  
 and make their Crime their Punishment.  
 But when they had smarted sufficiently  
 for their perverse Folly, and sensibly ex-  
 perience the Difference between an easy  
 Government, and a State of Anarchy; he  
 restored the former to them by so strange  
 and surprizing a Turn of Providence, as  
 few Histories can parallel. An Event wished  
 for by many, hoped for by few, but ex-  
 pected by none. A Design carefully con-  
 cealed from any one's Knowledge by the  
 principal Actor, and perhaps not fully re-  
 solved

solved on by himself many Days before SERM.  
the Accomplishment of it; but when ac- XV.  
complished, received with universal Joy,  
and submitted to with so ready and chear-  
ful an Acquiescence, with so little of Strug-  
gle and Opposition, as if the whole Body  
of the People had been in the Secret of the  
Restoration, and been disposed by some  
previous Notice to expect the Blessing of  
such a Change.

BUT the Disposition was from above;  
it was the secret Influence of a divine Mo-  
nitor, that wrought so sudden a Conver-  
sion in them, that shewed them the Er-  
rors of their former ill Conduct, and taught  
them to embrace their own Happiness and  
Security. How wise is God in his Coun-  
sels, how wonderful in his Works! How  
short is human Foresight, how precarious  
the Schemes of the ablest Politicians! By  
what unexpected Means, in how unlooked  
for a Manner are the greater Dispensations  
of Providence brought to pass! Vain is the  
Strength of the Mighty, uselefs is the  
Craft of the Subtle, in crossing any Ends,  
which he is resolved to accomplish, or in  
promoting those which he is determined



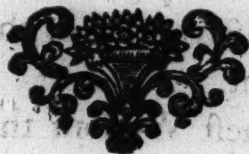
SERM. to bring to nought. Without his Assistance, neither can the strong Man gain the Battle, nor the swift win the Race, nor Men of the deepest Reach of Understanding succeed in their Designs. They may value themselves highly on their supposed Abilities, and that Superiority of Genius, by which they are distinguished from other Men; they may entertain themselves with their large and comprehensive Views, and the Vastness of their Schemes: But when they have deliberated with the utmost Sagacity, 'tis God at last that will determine the Issue. He has numberless Ways of defeating their best laid Stratagems, and turning their pretended Wisdom into Foolishness. They are infinitely more inconsiderable in his Hands, than the meanest Instrument they work with is in theirs. He can cast them down from the most promising Height of Expectation, when they are big with vain Hopes, and think themselves out of the Reach of Disappointment.

THE truest Wisdom then is that which cometh from above: The surest Policy is to recommend ourselves to the divine Protection,

section, to engage in no Designs wherein **SERM.**  
we may not reasonably promise ourselves **XV.**  
his Favour and Encouragement. And they  
will ever be the best Patriots and the best  
Subjects, will contribute most effectually  
to the Welfare and Preservation of their  
King and Country, who prosecute all their  
Aims by the most honourable, righteous,  
and christian Methods, and direct them  
to the Glory of that God, without whose  
Blessing on our Endeavours, whatever we  
take in Hand must unavoidably miscarry.

*To whom, with the Son and the Holy  
Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all  
Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion,  
both now and for evermore. Amen.*

**F I N I S.**



to engage in no Affairs wherein  
we may not reasonably promise ourselves  
XV.

And they  
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Subjects will contribute most effectually  
to the Welfare and Preservation of their  
King and Country, who prosecute all their  
Affairs by the most honourable, righteous  
and

### ERRATA in Vol. III.

Page 226. l. 5. read hundreds. p. 335.  
r. Jezreelite. p. 414. l. 5, 6. r. destitute,  
p. 417. l. 2. and p. 424. l. 6. and p. 447.  
l. 13. r. worldly. p. 474. l. last, read  
sensible.





